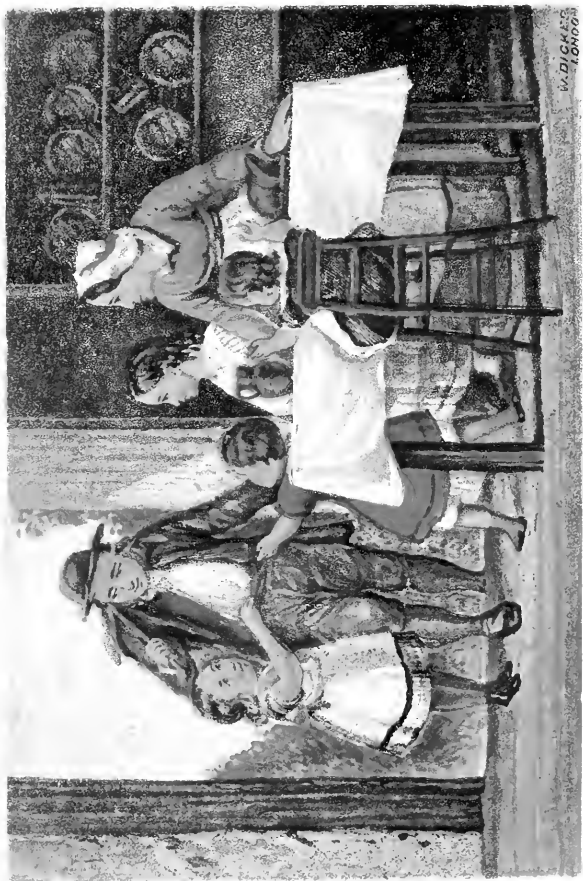






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A BOOK
FOR
THE HOUSEHOLD.

Home, Sweet Home! and
other Tales.

Fourteenth Thousand.

LONDON: JARROLD AND SONS,
12, PATERNOSTER ROW.



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HOME, SWEET HOME!

THE GOOD MOTHER.

HOUSEHOLD HAPPINESS.

SUNDAY EXCURSIONS.

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“HOME! SWEET HOME!”

MRS. COWELL was dreadfully busy, and as cross as possible. The weather was hot; the children had holidays; the baby was teething, and whined fretfully the livelong day; the washing was about, and—it was Friday. Mrs. Cowell was by no means the best-tempered woman in the world, and, seeing that she had so many things to ruffle her temper just at the time of which I am writing, can you wonder that she was cross?

Her eldest girl, Fanny, was sitting on the door-step dandling the baby somewhat roughly on her knee, and trying to soothe it with one of the songs that she had learned at school. Fanny had a clear voice, and the words rang out sweetly—

“Home! home! sweet, sweet home!

Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home.”

The child sang without thinking much of what she was saying. For had you questioned her closely, you would soon have discovered that she thought any place, even the streets, better than home. There was discomfort, untidiness, snappishness, quarrelling at home: it was a place which the children shunned as much as possible.

Mrs. Cowell was bending over her wash-tub; she felt hot and flurried. Fanny’s song floated through the house to the back kitchen; it grated on her mother’s ears.

“Fanny!” shouted Mrs. Cowell, “drop that! and just sing something sensible, if you must sing.”

Fanny changed her tune. “No place like home, indeed!” muttered Mrs. Cowell to herself; “them as wrote such rubbish ought to have had *my* place.”

Both Mr. and Mrs. Cowell worked hard; that cannot be denied. Mr. Cowell was a journeyman carpenter, and earned very fair wages. Mrs. Cowell went out three

days in the week to work at a laundress's; and by so doing she lost more than she gained, though she didn't know it. Her house was always disorderly; her children were untidy and neglected; Mr. Cowell spent his evenings out; in short, the home was miserable.

Fanny, who was eleven years of age, had a sorry life of it. She managed to get to school sometimes, but got scolded for irregular attendance. She had been turned away from two schools. Going so irregularly as she did, the teachers told her she was a bad example to the other children. So now she went to a free school, where she could take the baby on days when her mother went out to work. Fanny had one brother older, and two or three younger, than herself. These she had to "manage" in her mother's absence, and it was no easy task, I can tell you. A child ought never to be placed in such circumstances. If the wives of our working men would be wise and do that which is best for their families, they must certainly be "*keepers at home*."

Mr. Cowell was very careless of home. His garden gave abundant proof of this: it was trampled and overgrown with weeds. There was a nice square plot at the front of the house; and a long strip behind, sufficient to grow nearly enough vegetables for the use of the family. But it was cut up into patches which were claimed by the different children, and over which they quarrelled to their hearts' content. The house itself ought to have been a little paradise. It was one of a row built on improved principles, and it had every convenience for housekeeping. When the family first went into it, Mrs. Cowell resolved to turn over a new leaf and keep it nice. She put neat muslin curtains to the front windows, and beat the children oftener than ever for coming in with muddy shoes, for scratching the paint, or smearing the windows. But the new house was only a nine-days' wonder. When the curtains became dirty they remained dirty; concerning the smeared windows and dirtied floors, Mrs. Cowell said she "couldn't be for everlasting turning the house out of the windows;" and the flowers which had been planted in the garden grew wild, and faded for want of

tending; so the new home speedily became as slovenly as the old one had been. I dare say you know, friends, that it is very easy to “turn over a new leaf;” but it is hard work to carry out the new resolutions that are imprinted on the new page. It requires a great deal of patience and steady perseverance to enable you to do so. But when you are struggling up-hill, never halt midway, friends, *never halt midway*. It is easy to run the *first steps* of a race, but having once set out, don’t give up: persevere to the end. I have said that Mr. Cowell was very careless of home. He certainly brought the greater part of his wages home to his wife every week; but earning money for the maintenance of the family is but one part of the duty of a husband and father. To be a comfort and a blessing to his home he must be the “head” of it, overseeing, arranging, and taking a deep interest in every thing that concerns his family.

Mr. Cowell cared nothing about this part of his duty. He came home to his meals, grumbled, (so setting an example to the children to do the same) and went off to his work again. In the evenings he joined some of his fellow workmen for “recreation,” either going out for long walks, sitting gossiping in a neighbour’s house, or smoking and drinking in a public-house. Meanwhile, his neglected and miserable children were left to do what they liked. They felt that they were not cared for at home, so they sought the streets and street companions; and in the streets children learn that which is ruinous to their moral health.

Mr. Cowell was not what you would call a drunkard. He was very rarely unable to walk straight. Although he indulged rather more freely on Sundays than on other days, he was not in the habit of keeping “Saint Monday.” But though he called himself a “moderate drinker,” he spent many shillings every week that would have made his home comfortable had they been properly spent; and the useless and health-destroying drink that he bought sapped him of energy, clouded his mind, and kept him from rising intellectually and morally. In his spare hours he was not in the humour for studying or improving

his mind in any way; he had no inclination for tidying or beautifying the homestead, or for interesting, and giving pleasure to, his poor children. He was hankering after the companionship of men as bad or worse than himself. He didn't feel that dignity and exalted pleasure and peace that a right-doing man feels; how could he?

So the days, and months, and years passed by. He went on in his old drowsy, dead-alive, grumbling, miserable way, until a little circumstance occurred which caused quite a revolution in his tastes and habits.

There was a man who worked in the same shop as Mr. Cowell. On account of his steady business habits and superior manners, this man was nicknamed "our gentleman," by his fellow workmen. His name was George Parry. He was one who dearly loved his home, and he did everything in his power to make it happy. He lived no selfish life. All his spare time was devoted to his family. *They* could sing with heart and voice, "There's no place like home."

George Parry knew that Cowell's home was wretched. He often saw the children running about the streets, ragged and dirty; and at such times he would say to his neat, motherly-looking wife, "How sad it is to see the poor little Cowells running about as though they had no owners!" And Mrs. Parry would reply, "Ah! Mr. and Mrs. Cowell little think what a terrible rod they are making for their own backs." Then she would go on to say that George ought certainly to speak to Mr. Cowell in a friendly way, and try to influence him to see after his family and attend to their best interests.

So one day in the workshop, Mr. Parry managed to get near the bench where Mr. Cowell was working. He began a conversation which presently turned upon ship-building; and the two, in the most lively manner, discussed the merits of ships, from Noah's Ark to the *Great Eastern*. Mr. Cowell was quite at home on the subject of the *Great Eastern*. He had heard it talked about and quibbled over in the public-houses so much, that he flattered himself that he could talk very intelligently concerning that monarch of vessels.

"Ah!" said George Parry, "I've had a good many conversations with my boys about that ship; and my eldest lad, William, took up so with the idea of it, that what must he do but go and build a model ship! and I must say he's done it first rate, rigged it out, and made quite a smart thing of it. I tell him it's good enough to be put under a glass case. The lad has named it *The Britannia*. Perhaps you'd like to call and take a peep at it; William would be quite proud to show it to you. I like to encourage my boys in little works of the kind. The power to make such things may be of great use."

"Well," said John, with a half sigh, "some children do turn out clever, and are orderly, and satisfied to stay at home and do such things; but as for mine, you might as well think of chaining the wind as keeping them indoors of evenings. While they're in the house it's all helter-skelter to get out again. Even at meal times they eat their food fast enough to choke 'em, or else take it out in their hands."

George Parry knew where the fault lay, but he did not allude to it just then; he only said, "Well, John, I shall be very glad to see you any time that you like to drop in. I should certainly like you to see William's ship." John promised to make an early call; and the next evening, after giving himself an extra cleaning, he bent his steps in the direction of George Parry's house.

His knock was answered by Mrs. Parry. She was dressed with care and neatness. In her dark serviceable print gown, white apron, neat cap, and with a cheerful face, she looked just as a working-man's wife should look. John made known his errand; and Mrs. Parry asked him to walk out into the back, where Mr. Parry and the boys were doing a "bit of gardening."

John followed her through the tidy house; and felt inclined to open his eyes with wonder when he reached the garden. It was not so large as his own, but it was in beautiful order. All round the garden ran a border of sweet flowers: the middle plot was planted with vegetables. "Good evening," said Mr. Cowell, "I hope I shan't disturb you; you look as busy as bees here."

The children paused in their weeding and looked with curiosity at the visitor. There was William the "ship-BUILDER" there: he was the eldest of the family; and there were two boys besides, and a baby girl, who was "helping" by digging in a corner with an old knife.

"We are rather busy," said Mr. Parry, in answer to his friend's remark, "but we shall soon have done out here. Evening is the best time for gardening this hot weather. How do you get on with yours, John?"

John seemed confused, and stammered a little as he replied, "Well, my garden don't seem to thrive somehow; no matter what I plant in it, it never comes to anything. I've almost given it up."

"Given it up!" echoed George. "Don't say that, John, about such a nice garden as you've got. Why, it's a good bit larger than this, isn't it?"

"Half as large again, I should think," said John.

"Well, lad," said George, cheerfully, "make it yield what it ought to yield. Seeing that you are its master you must look after it constantly; tickle it with spade, and hoe, and rake, until it laughs with a plentiful harvest, as I've heard somebody say. If you let it alone, it won't take the trouble to grow you anything worth having; you must oversee it and *whip it up*, like, or it will be sure to sulk, and become weedy and seedy."

John laughed as he leant against a wall, with his hands in his pockets, watching the father and boys at work. "Now, Willie, look alive," said Mr. Parry to his eldest boy, "there are six or seven lettuces ready to tie up yonder. Just see if there's a good one you can pull for Mr. Cowell; may-be he'd like it for his supper. Have you got any lettuce in your garden, John?"

"No," said John, feeling a wee bit ashamed. "I've told you that we've got nothing worth having."

"Well, now, take my advice, there's a good fellow, and tickle it up a bit. It isn't too late to plant some things even now. And it seems to do folks like you and me, that are shut up all day, a world of good to do a bit of gardening. It's healthy for the body; and then it wakes up thoughts in the mind. You know we are

reminded that we may sow, and plant, and water, but none but God can give the increase. And it is so interesting to watch things grow. I'm sure we've been looking out all the spring for the coming of these flowers; and see what lovely colours they are!"

"The finest border of flowers that I've seen for many a long day," said John, thinking gloomily of his wilderness of a place.

"Shall we pick a bunch for—" began one of the boys, shyly.

"For Mr. Cowell, Frank?" said his father. "Yes, surely, if he'll accept of them. I think a bunch of flowers looks nice in the best room."

"The best room, indeed!" thought John. He had no such a place in his house.

"Wait, Frankie," cried George, as the little boy began pulling at a rose bush, "I think mother had better see to the picking of the flowers; you know she's very particular about them.

The child ran into the house, and in a few moments re-appeared with his mother. She came out with some sewing in her hand, and, hearing what was required of her, laid it down on a gooseberry bush, and cut several beautiful flowers, which she handed to Frank to tie up.

"They are very fine!" said John, admiringly, as the child handed them to him.

"Here, father, I have done the lettuce," said William, presently, "is there anything else to do?"

"Not this evening, Willie; gather the things together, and we'll carry them in. You run and get washed, Mr. Cowell wants you to show him *The Britannia*."

The lad smiled and blushed as he stooped to pick up the spade. He was pleased that any one should take an interest in his work. He quickly disappeared into the little washhouse, and was ready to accompany John into the house, by the time his father and the little ones came to take possession of the washhouse.

William led the way into the "best room." It was quite a "parlour," although I must tell you that the carpet did not extend all over the floor, there was no

sofa, and there was not a useless article of furniture in the room. But it was a pleasant, clean, cosy little place, and had the air of a "best room" about it. William's ship stood on the centre of the table. He gave it into Mr. Cowell's hands that he might examine it, while the boy explained the different parts. Then he took a book from the book-case, and told John that it was from that book—"The Old Sea Captain"—that he had gained information to enable him to build *The Britannia*.

In the midst of their interesting conversation Mr. Parry entered the room.

The younger children were soon afterwards sent to bed. William went to his favourite seat by the kitchen window to do his home lessons, and John was left with Parry and his wife in the parlour, Mrs. Parry sat sewing.

John did not feel quite at his ease with them. He would have been quite at home among pot-house orators, and could have "held forth" as bravely as any of them on politics, of which they knew about as much as the fat landlady who sometimes listened to them.

"Well, I must say your boy is uncommon clever," remarked John, when William was gone into the kitchen.

"Yes," replied George, with a gratified smile, "I expect he will make himself famous some day."

"And he's so good and obedient," said Mrs. Parry, quietly; "it's such a comfort to have the eldest so, because he's an example to all the rest."

"Yes, it is," said John, thinking regretfully of his eldest boy, who was a young scapegrace.

"God is faithful to His word," said George, seriously. "He has said, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he shall not depart from it.' That is very true; but that *training* is no easy work: it requires one to be continually watchful and careful."

After a pause he added, cheerfully, "I suppose you can stay and have half-an-hour's chat, John. I generally read to the Missis in evenings, but we'll forego our book this evening. We're going through Smiles' 'Self Help,' it's a capital book; have you ever seen it, John?"

John knew very little about books now, though he had

been something of a reader in his younger days. He had never even heard of 'Self Help,' and so answered George's question with a quiet "No."

"I advise you to get it from the Free Library," said George; it's a capital thing. Missis is as much interested in it as I am myself, and William says it's as good as a story book."

"We folks are not much of ones for reading," said John. "Missis says she's got too much to do to trouble about books. You see she isn't at home much."

"Does she go out to work?" asked Mrs. Parry.

"Yes; two or three days every week."

"O, what a pity!" said Mrs. Parry. "It is so dreadful for the home and children when the mother goes out to work. I do think she would find herself better off by staying at home. I assure you, Mr. Cowell; I would not leave my children for three shillings a day, I'm sure I should lose by it even at that rate. And then what comfort is there at home when the children are left to do as they like?"

"Not a bit," said John, promptly; "but then you see a family is so expensive that one is glad of a few shillings coming in any way."

"How many children have you, now?" asked George.

"Five," said John.

"Just the number we had till we lost our second last summer," remarked George. And he added, "Now, let us talk in a friendly way, John: you get just the same wages as I do, yet there's no need of my Missis going out to work. Indeed she always manages to put by a little every week out of the earnings for a rainy day, you know."

"Well, I don't know how you do it; it comes over me by notches," said John, with a short laugh.

"It's the Missis that does it, you must ask her," said George.

"Ah, you do everything to help me," said his wife, "or I shouldn't get along half so well. You see, Mr. Cowell, we manage in this way; we never buy anything but what is quite needful. George brings every farthing

of his money home. He never buys such rubbish as tobacco or snuff; and as for beer or any such drinks we never spend a halfpenny in them: we are healthier without them, and a thousand times happier than those who buy them. Then, you know, I'm always at home to see after the place and take care of things; and I can tell you that I find quite enough to do to keep the house in order and the children tidy. We have everything done at home, baking, washing, making, mending; and what with that, house cleaning, and attending to the children, my time is quite taken up. I couldn't think of going out to work unless I made up my mind to neglect my duty at home."

"Well, I believe you there," said John. "When the mother is out much, things are bound to go wrong at home. I must have a talk with my Missis about it. I'm certain of this; there's a screw loose somewhere with us. Before ever we could get as straight and comfortable as you are we should have to turn everything topsy-turvy. But how do you manage with your children? they don't seem to want to be off into the streets."

"Bless you, no," said Mr. Parry; "we've never allowed them to go, so they haven't a wish to go. I'll tell you how we manage; we try to make home so cheerful and happy, that the children shall feel when they are out that they would rather go home than anywhere else in the world. We always study how we can amuse and interest them. You know God has given them to us to train up so that they may be a blessing to the world, and a glory to Himself; and I am sure they need our anxious thoughts, and earnest attention and prayers always. We study to keep broils and bickerings from our family circle. And with gratitude to God—for He is the author of all our blessings—I can say that we live very peacefully and happily. We certainly have little troubles of one kind or another to bear very often: for instance, sickness, and last year we had a death; but I assure you that such troubles are easy to bear compared with such as having wicked, rebellious children; a scolding, ill-managing wife; and a disorderly home."

"I believe it," said John, thoughtfully.

"Do you ever feel ambitious, John?" said Mr. Parry.

"Ambitious," repeated John, slowly; he was trying to recollect the meaning of the word.

"Yes, ambitious," said George. "I mean in this way: without feeling discontented with your present lot, do you ever find yourself reaching after something better?"

"I should think so," returned John, promptly. "I should hope my condition would be bettered some fine day; it's a hum-drum, slaving sort of a life as it is."

"But you know, John, *hoping's* no good without *striving*. Now, I expected to be entirely on my own hands before now. But that long spell of illness that I had the winter before last, and our poor Lucy's illness and death last summer dragged me back dreadfully. However, now I am striving to make up for past losses; and I am hoping that in two years at the most, if things go on well, I shall be my own master, and begin business on my own account."

"Then you *will* be quite the 'gentleman,' George," said Mr. Cowell.

"In one sense I have always tried to be that," said Mr. Parry. "I remember my mother saying to me one day, when I was quite a young man, 'George, my lad, though we are poor you may be a gentleman now and always; for fine clothes, and lands, and riches, don't make the gentleman; but a kind heart, a cultivated mind, and courteous manners do.' Ah, John, my mother had poverty and hard work for her lot, but she never forgot what made a true lady, and I say that she was fit to be a duchess. Well," he added gaily, "are you ambitious to begin business on your own account, John?"

John pushed his fingers through his hair, and said that he "Didn't see the use of dreaming of such a thing even;" it seemed so unlikely to him.

"Where there's a will there's a way," said George Parry. "You *determine* to do it, and you'll do it. I suppose you live rent free, John?"

"Rent free!" echoed John, "I should think I didn't! Do you, then?"

"Yes, I bought this house four years after we were married. You must know that I had saved something before I married."

"Well, Missis and I began life with nothing," said John, "and we've jogged on pretty well; but I can't call the house we live in my own, and I don't think I ever shall. You see, property's dear; and we've got a lot of hungry mouths to feed."

"For all that, John, it isn't impossible to get a house of one's own now-a-days. I know you've got five growing children to maintain; yet don't you think, now, that you could manage to put by a little in the savings' bank every week out of your earnings? you know we get good wages, John."

"I'm sure I couldn't," said John, "Missis is waiting for the money every Friday, and she very often grumbles because she says it isn't enough to pay all expenses."

"But perhaps you don't give her all of it?" said George.

John fidgetted his elbow on the back of his chair, and looked as though he wished himself clear out of Parry's house. "Well," said he, "I give her nearly all of it. Of course I keep back a *little* for myself. A fellow that works hard don't like to be without a shilling in his pocket."

"Well, John, if you put it in your pocket and *keep it there* it's almost as good as putting it in the bank. Perhaps you're saving up a few pounds on the sly, so as to give your wife a pleasant surprise some day."

"Not I," said John. "I lay it out for the benefit of my health."

George Parry looked inquisitive, but did not speak. John passed his fingers through his hair again, and said with hesitation, "You know I'm one as can't get along without beer. I know you won't hold with me here, because you're all water drinkers; but I tell you that I can't work without it."

"Have you ever tried, John?"

"Yes; for three days once, and I was regular upset."

"Three days!" echoed George. "You didn't give

yourself time to feel better without it. That wasn't a fair trial, John. I know that a person who has been accustomed to take beer and such things for years would feel the loss of them for two or three weeks after giving them up; but afterwards he would feel so much benefit from abstaining from such drinks as would quite surprise him. If you had tried our plan for three months instead of three days I should have called it fair play."

"Well, I don't think I should be happy without it," said John.

"Don't say that, John," replied Parry, earnestly, "It cannot give a bit of happiness, but it can rob a man of any he may have, and be destructive to everything that is good and noble and beautiful. It often sours a man's temper, robs him of his peace of mind, blasts his character, destroys his self-respect, makes him a curse to his family instead of a blessing, takes all the energy out of him, and ruins his soul. Excessive drinking undermines the strongest constitution, because it is injurious to the human system. God has blessed us with the bounteous gift of water, which is our natural drink; and, surely, He must be grieved and angry with us, when we accustom ourselves to undue indulgence in intoxicating beverages. Wife and I have read books on this subject, so we know what's what."

"Well, you know I don't take much," said John, after an awkward pause, "I'm sure that a pint-and-a-half or two pints a day, can't hurt any man—that's all I take, just enough to keep one alive."

"Excuse me, John, but you must mean just enough to rob one of true energy, and to keep one from rising. Now, looking at the money question, only let us see how the case stands. Let us say that you spend fivepence a day, putting it at the lowest figure, eh, John?"

"Yes, acquiesced John, whose conscience told him that it was oftener a shilling or eighteenpence a day.

"Well," continued George Parry, "fivepence a day would be two and elevenpence a week, including Sunday." John nodded his head. "Two and elevenpence a week

would make seven pounds, eleven shillings, and eight pence a year. Wouldn't that be something to lay by every year towards getting a house of your own, John?"

"I should think so," replied John, looking very uneasy. And he thought to himself, that if he had put the lowest figure at *tenpence* a day, he would have spoken more truthfully; and, doubling Parry's figures, John thought of the amount—fifteen pounds three shillings and fourpence a year! And that useful sum of money he was wasting every year of his life. No wonder that he had no honest ambition to rise in the world—no wonder that he had no house to call his own—that his wife had to go out to work—that his children looked untidy and neglected—that he had no love for books, or home, or garden! Yet, as I have told you before, he could not be called a drunkard.

"Well," thought he, "the Parrys look well enough, and I'm sure they're the happiest people I've ever met with. I suppose I might have just such a house as they've got, if I was as careful of my earnings as Parry is. Certainly that's a good round sum to spend in beer in a year—more than fifteen pounds; and if a fellow can be as well in health without it, or, as Parry says, *better*, I think he'd be wise to pocket the money, or lay it out in something useful. Wonder what Mother Stibbs, at the *Red Lion* would say, if I was to turn water drinker!"

"Well, George," he added, aloud, "I shall think over your arithmetic. I'll have a talk with the missis about it. I really do think that we might make a change of some sort to make home more comfortable like.

"I'm sure you might make a beautiful change," said Parry, earnestly. "But don't forget this, John—you must begin with *yourself*. Begin with that little matter of the two-and-elevenpence a week. Depend upon it that if you do, it will be the first step to your rising to comfort and real respectability. Now I suppose we must say good-night," he added, as John rose from his chair. "I'll fetch the flowers and lettuce for you. I think you'll find the lettuce young and white. Ours are a first-class sort this year."

John thanked his kind friends, and wished them good-bye. On his way home, he saw two of his children playing with a number of rough rude boys, in the dusty street. He stood and called them. They approached him slowly with their heads hung down, as if in fear of a sharp reproof or something worse.

They were greatly surprised when, instead of this, he said,—“Now, lads, come in home.” James, who was thirteen years old, and the eldest of the family, ventured to look up presently and ask,—“Did you buy that lettuce, father?”

“No, I had it given to me.”

“And the flowers, father?” enquired the younger boy Robert.

“And the flowers,” replied Mr. Cowell. “Now if we had such flowers in our garden, it ’ud be something like.”

“Ours is such a bad garden,” said James. “The things get trampled down dreadful; and if they didn’t, I don’t believe they’d grow.”

“That’s what I’ve said,” remarked his father. “But however we’ll see some day.”

When Mr. Cowell entered the house with his two boys, his wife, in her astonishment at seeing the three together, accosted him with,—“Is anything the matter? Have any of you been up to any mischief?” And seeing the lettuce and flowers, she added,—“Have they been taking anything?” “Bless you, no!” said John. “George Parry gave me the lettuce for supper, and the flowers for our *best room*!” John gave a short laugh, and continued,—“They didn’t know we hadn’t a best room, and, of course, I didn’t say anything.”

“I suppose they’ve got a best room, and everything else they want,” said Mrs. Cowell, pettishly. “Mrs. Parry’s got a lady’s life of it compared with mine. If she’d my place for a month, I guess she wouldn’t hold her head so high.”

“Law, bless you!” said John, “she don’t hold her head high; she’s as humble as any woman I’ve ever seen. You must pay her a visit some of these days.”

“Pay her a visit!” echoed Mrs. Cowell, angrily.

"It just shows what you men know about work. When, I should like to know, have I got time to go and see anybody? Ain't it slave, slave, from morning till night every day?" And Mrs. Cowell went plump down on her knees again, to finish sweeping up the fireplace with a hand-broom. It was Tuesday, Mrs. Cowell had been out washing all day, and had to go again on the morrow. She had arrived home about half-an-hour before her husband came in with the two boys, and she had found the house in extreme confusion.

Fanny was sent upstairs with the fretful baby, while her mother set-to to clear up the disorderly kitchen. It was hard work for the child to pacify the baby, who was clamouring loudly for his mother. Fanny walked about the bed-room with him, tapped her fingers on the window-panes, and, finally, sat down tired, to jog him about on her knee. She began singing "Home, Sweet Home," to soothe him. Surely the familiar tune must have been running in the child's head.

Mr. Cowell heard her singing it a few minutes after he came in. He looked round his dwelling, and, thinking that it looked anything but "sweet," he wondered how the child could sing that tune so heartily.

"Fanny sings very well," he remarked to his wife. "Parry says as they can sing those words with *heart and voice*." Mrs. Cowell was cross, and that last utterance of her husband's did not tend to make her better. She said very snappishly,—“Don't you talk to me about what them stuck-up Parrys do, and what they don't do, John. One thing's clear, Mrs. Parry haven't got the trouble as *I* have, so you just shut-up about them."

John did not allude to them again. He went out to the pump and washed the lettuce. As he re-entered the kitchen with it, Mrs. Cowell was sending her boys up to bed. Each child had a thick piece of bread in his hand.

"Stop, mother," said Mr. Cowell, "let the boys have a bit o' lettuce with their bread."

The boys came back, and eat their lettuce standing. Then they went upstairs to the tune of "Don't be up to any of your larking, or I'll come up and break your

bones!" which Mrs. Cowell uttered in a most unmotherly voice. At a call from her mother, Fanny came downstairs with the baby. Mrs. Cowell took the little one, and told Fanny to get her supper, and be off to bed.

Mr. Cowell cut her supper for her, and when she was going out of the room, said,—“Good-night, Fanny,” which was a very unusual thing for him to do.

Mrs. Cowell was almost too cross then to notice that her husband had not been drinking at all, and that he was behaving kindly to the children. She undressed the baby, and rocked it to sleep. Meanwhile, John walked out into the back garden to look about him a little.

It was a wretched waste place, over-run with weeds. John leaned against the door-post, and let his eye wander over the disgraceful scene. I think he felt ashamed as he contrasted it with George Parry's blooming plot of ground. The setting sun threw smiling golden beams down upon it, but it only made it look more desolate. John thought how rich blossoming flowers would look in that beautiful light. Presently he heard his wife's footstep in the back-kitchen.

“Jane,” he called.

“Yes,” she replied.

“Here, just come out and have a look at this garden.”

“What, have the children been playing any more of their pranks?”

“Not that I know of,” said John, “But look here, Jane, I'm thinking that we might make quite a Paradise of this garden—you see the mould looks very good.”

Mrs. Cowell's bad temper was fast giving way. “It 'ud be all right enough if it was attended to,” she said. “If it was properly seen after, we might have as good flowers as Parry's.

“That's just what I think,” said John, quickly. “And I think I shall set-to, and clear away the weeds and rubbish. A few flower-seeds don't cost much, and then just see how jolly it looks to have flowers of your own in a garden. Yes, I'll do the garden, Jane, and we'll have some flowers, even if we haven't got a best room to put 'em in.”

John gave a side-glance at Jane, to see how she would take the hint about the "best room." Not being in such a bad temper now, she replied, quietly, "Well, I can't think how the Parrys manage to keep a best room. Goodness knows I couldn't do it. Even the kitchen and the bed-rooms get ransacked out and out. I don't know how it would be with a few tidy things in a best room."

"Why, look here," said John, "I think Mrs. Parry manages in this way—she's always at home to see after things, and to take care of 'em."

"That's just it," said Mrs. Cowell. "Of course it can't be expected that I can keep things in tip-top order when I'm out away from home three or four days in every week."

"Well, Jane," said Mr. Cowell, "I should like you to give up going out to work."

"Give up going out to work!" echoed Mrs. Cowell, opening her eyes in astonishment. "If I did, John, you'd find that some of us 'ud have short allowance."

"Well, Jane, Parry gets just the same wages as I do, and he lays by money every week, he told me so."

"Then they must pinch somewhere," said Mrs. Cowell, with a decisive nod of the head.

"The missis manages all the money matters," said John.

"Well, I'll defy her to save if Parry don't give her all that he earns," said Jane.

"He gives her every farthing," said John.

"Ah, that's where it is, John. Parry don't whip off five or six shillings or more every week for the *Red Lion*."

"'Course he don't—he's been a water-drinker for years, remarked John. "And as hale and hearty a fellow as I ever wish to see. And what a chap he is for book-learning! You ought just to see what a library of books he can sport! And Mrs. Parry's just as fond of books—he reads out loud to her in the evenings while she's at her sewing."

"Something like," uttered Mrs. Cowell. "Time was, John, when I was as fond of reading as anybody, but

when the trouble comes one forgets all about books. I'm sure I've got no time for nothing but struggling to get food for the children's mouths and clothes for their backs." Mrs. Cowell picked up her apron, and ran her finger and thumb along the hem of it, while a tear gathered in one corner of her eye.

John stood thoughtfully hoeing up a stone with the heel of his boot. "Jane," he said presently, "if you'll promise not to go out to work next week, I'll give you all my wages on Friday night."

"All your wages, John!—but can you? I'm sure I should be glad enough to stay at home and attend to my own house, but then you see, John, I shouldn't dare to give up my place of work unless you could promise to give me the wages *every* week, because of course, if I stayed away one week, they would get somebody to take my place, and then they wouldn't take me on again."

"Jane, I'll try and give you all the money every week," said John. "I mean to try George Parry's plan of living. Any way, it seems more comfortable than mine; and we'll do our garden up, and see if we can't keep our boys in at night: I'm quite sure of this, Jane, that the streets are bad for children."

"They don't get no good there," said Mrs. Cowell.

"Well," said John, "we'll begin at the garden to-morrow evening. James and Robert shall stay in and help, and Johnny can lend a hand too. That'll be one evening at home; then we can go on gardening for four or five evenings, till the place is in apple-pie order; and after that I must plan something else to keep the boys' heads and hands employed. We'll look round the house and set the furniture to rights. We've got a few chairs and a table that seem to be saying good-bye to their legs. After we have doctored them we can do a bit of painting, and make you a bran new clothes-horse—eh, missis?"

All traces of Mrs. Cowell's temper had by this time vanished, and she said, "Yes, John," with something like a hearty laugh.

Robert was dozing off to sleep upstairs, when his

brother James gave him a poke in the side, saying, "What ever's up, Bob? didn't you hear mother laughing?"

"Mother laughing!" said sleepy Robert; "don't talk stuff; you're only dreaming; mother never laughs when father's at home."

"Am I dreaming?" said James, warmly; "tell ye *I* heard her, drony! How could *you* when you was fast asleep?"

Here the conversation ceased. The young Cowells never talked to each other very civilly; and no wonder, for when the parents of a family are continually jarring and snapping you cannot expect to find the children agreeable among themselves.

But it was certainly true that Mrs. Cowell was laughing. Feelings that had lain so long dormant in her heart that she thought they were dead began to struggle into life again. The dreams that she had indulged in before her marriage, of having a happy home and a loving husband, came back to memory now. She wondered whether it were possible that peace and harmony and affection could be restored to their uncomfortable home, and while she wondered she ventured to hope. Then she said to herself, "Yes, the home might be all right if it wasn't for the children; but I don't believe we could ever get them into order, they're such wicked unmanageable little creatures." As she stood thinking she uttered her thoughts aloud, "Ah, John, I don't believe you'll ever get them boys to stay in at nights for long."

"I must and will, Jane. I ought never to have let them go out into the streets; but now that Parry's doings have waked me up to see what's right and what isn't, I shall make 'em do what I think is right. I'm their father, and they must obey me," said John, firmly.

"John," said Mrs. Cowell, presently, "I'm bound to go out to work to-morrow, because I didn't give Mrs. Jukes any notice about leaving off; but I'll tell her that to-morrow must be the last day."

"Very well, Jane; but I'm sorry this couldn't be the last day."

That evening Mr. and Mrs. Cowell sat down to supper together for the first time for three or four years. Other evenings John was out with his companions. They sat in the front room, which was not kept as a "best room" by them; it was made a kitchen, and the proper kitchen behind this room had lumber, and saucepans, and other things strewn untidily about it. In this room, too, Mrs. Cowell did her washing; and lines were stretched across it, on which some ragged thing or other was sure to be always hanging. Mrs. Cowell did her washing there, because, as she said, her little wash-house was "too poky—there wasn't room to swing a cat round;" just as if wash-houses were made to swing cats round in. But there would have been ample room for her to do her washing in if she had kept the little place in order. Instead of anything like order, however, pans, old baskets, and such things lay about in such disorder, that you could scarcely make your way to the pump for water.

As John sat eating his supper in the front room, he looked round about him—first at the walls, from which the pretty paper was torn off in patches; at the few prints, which were nailed to the walls without frames or glass to preserve them; at the grimed boards of the floor; at the side-boards, which had once been painted mahogany colour, but which were now fast growing white; then he looked at the window, across which was slung a curtain, that pure water had not fondled for many a long day.

After John had taken a quiet survey of the place, he said, "It's clear that this room was meant for a parlour, Jane; you see the walls are papered. Then that ain't a kitchen grate, by no means. I'm sure the next room is larger and more comfortable for living in. Why don't we live in there, Jane?"

"If you'll take the trouble to look round it you'll pretty soon see," said Jane; "there's saucepans, and pans, and all sorts o' things about."

"But couldn't you keep 'em somewhere else, Jane?"

"Where else could I keep 'em?"

"Why, you could put the pans under the bench in

the wash-house, and put the saucepans up on a shelf in the coal-place."

"Yes, if there was a shelf to put 'em on."

"I'll set one up there for you," said John, "and one in the wash-house to keep a few things on."

"Well, perhaps I might clear this room out after a bit," said Mrs. Cowell, thoughtfully; "but then it wouldn't look much of a parlour after all; see how dirty and torn this paper is."

"I'll get and paper it out fresh in time," said John; "I could get a few pieces of paper, enough for this room, very cheap; but we mustn't be in too much of a hurry. We'll do the garden first, Jane; then the shelves for your pots and pans; then we'll take the parlour in hand."

You will perhaps wonder that John should be so hot about turning over a new leaf, especially as he had not thought anything about doing so, until he went to George Parry's house. But to his credit I must say, that John no sooner saw his way clear to do anything, than he felt ready to set about it with all his might.

He had no beer for his supper that night, and the reason he did not attempt to send for any was, that Parry had so clearly shown him that it was quite unnecessary, that it was hurtful to body and mind, and that people were much happier, healthier, and more comfortable every way without it.

This John told his wife after supper, and he added, "I mean to try Parry's plan. Of course, Jane, if I'm to give *all* the wages to you I must give over paying visits to the *Red Lion*; you know they're expensive. I shall soon see how the new way works."

The next day Mrs. Cowell went out to work for the last time. Mr. Cowell went home to dinner, and found his boys at home. Instead of cutting them a piece of bread and meat or cheese, and packing them off, as he was wont to do on days that his wife was out at work, he told them to sit round the table, and not move away until they had quite finished their dinner. They remembered the lettuce which their father kindly gave them the preceding evening, and wondered what had come

over him. Little Fanny was as pleased as possible, and tossed the baby up and down, and made her crow at her father, who snapped his great fingers at her, and made her as "pleased as Punch," as Johnny said.

After dinner, when the boys were going out to school, Mr. Cowell told them to stay in the back garden when they came home to tea, as he should be home early, and want them to help him work in the garden. Children like the idea of doing work with grown-up people, and the boys readily promised to do as their father bade them.

When the place was cleared up, Fanny put the baby's little sun-bonnet on her, and carried her to Mrs. Jukes', as the child was very anxious to let her mother know what a quiet, peaceful dinner-time they had had. Of course Mrs. Cowell was very pleased to hear that all had passed off well.

"Mind you get the kettle boiling for father's tea," said Mrs. Cowell, "and I shall try to be home soon after six." Fanny returned home with a light heart. She did not know of half the good things which her father intended to do, but somehow she had a consciousness that better days were coming; she even ventured to hope that she might be able to go back to her old school, and go regularly, and pay respectably, as other children did; and the thought of doing so infused so much life and spirit into her young heart that she sang her favourite old tune, "Home, sweet home," more vigorously than ever to the baby, while she placed the tea-things in anticipation of her father's speedy arrival home. A sorry "set" of tea-things theirs was: the cups and saucers were odd ones; they were chipped, cracked, and some of the cups could not boast of handles. Yet when Fanny had set them upon the old tea-tray, from which nearly all the japan was worn off, she thought they presented a very creditable appearance.

Mr. Cowell paid more attention to things that evening than he usually did. Now at other times he would not have noticed what was on the table at all, but now, as Fanny set the brown teapot on the tray—a teapot with

only half a spout—Mr. Cowell burst out laughing, and said, “Why Fanny, your crockery looks as though it had been in the wars!” and when the colour mounted to Fanny’s cheeks, and she could scarcely keep the tears back, because she had thought how *nice* the table looked, her father added, “But you can’t help it, can you, goody? We’ll have a bran new set when our ship comes in, won’t we, Fanny?” And Fanny laughed, and said archly,

“But when’s it coming in, father?”

“Before the sun shines both sides of the hedges, I dare say!” laughed he.

The time went merrily out in the garden that evening; not one of the children sighed for the streets, I can assure you; they were too proud and happy to be “gardeners,” with some one over them to direct them, and keep bickerings away. Fanny sat on the step of the back door, with the baby on her knee, watching them. She changed her tune this evening, and instead of singing “Home, sweet home” to the baby, she carolled another of the old school songs—

“I love the poor man’s garden,
It gives great joy to me,
That little precious plot of ground,
Before his door to see.”

Mrs. Cowell was in the house; and although she was very busy she did not roar out to Fanny to “shut up.”

In a week from the time that Mr. Cowell and his boys took the garden in hand it looked beautiful. The paths were made so even, and the few flowers looked in such a flourishing condition. The pretty little bit of ground at the front of the house was quite as radiant as the flower border at the back. The middle plot at the back was reserved for winter vegetables.

John put up shelves in all sorts of convenient places, for his wife to arrange things on, so that the house might be kept in order. And he allowed his boys to help in everything, although sometimes they hindered more than they helped, and did things in the wrong way. Yet John tried to control his impatience, and would not be

in a hurry over anything, because he desired to keep the boys pleasantly employed quite as much as to get the house in order; and he was so patient and cheerful with them that he very soon won their affection, and that was a blessed thing for John; for when parents have the affections of their children, they have a mine of wealth which nothing can ever destroy. But when parents disregard their children's affection, what tongue can tell their loss? They must be miserable and poor indeed!

Sometimes John proposed a game with the boys; and you might have seen him outside his back door playing at marbles with them like a great school-boy, and it was a right merry time.

Then they got old newspapers and strips of wood, and made a gigantic kite, taller than Robert; and when a nice breeze was moving in the evening John took the children right away to the fields, and there they let it up, and watched it mount, mount, till it became a tiny speck in the blue sky. And how proudly the boys stood and held the string while the huge kite tugged and tugged, as though it wanted to take a ramble through the sky without being in leading-strings. But no, the boys couldn't allow that; they had bestowed too much labour on it to allow it to skitter away to destruction.

The chairs were all mended at last, and Mrs. Cowell's new clothes-horse was made; yet still Mr. Cowell and the boys found enough to do. Robert had the picture-frames in hand, and a very tidy job he was making of them. Mr. Cowell was considering how he could paper out the front room in the most economical way.

I must tell you how wonderfully Mrs. Cowell's temper had improved in the meantime. You very seldom heard her raving at the children now, or passionately beating them for every slight offence; and she and her husband very rarely quarrelled now. I think the improvement in her temper was owing in a great measure to the change in her husband, for in the matter of temper the husband greatly influences the wife. If Mrs. Cowell's temper had formerly been bad, there was room for excuse for her; her husband was careless of

home and of the children ; he did not care a bit how his wife managed ; he never addressed a kind or thoughtful word to her, or an encouraging one to the children. But now that he manifested such a lively interest in the home and the children, she felt that it was some encouragement to do her utmost, to make home happy. Now she had a helper ; her husband had turned quite round, and was pulling the right way, and she felt true pleasure and satisfaction in pulling with him. The two were striving cheerfully together, and when husband and wife do that they are bound to succeed and be happy.

Yes, Mrs. Cowell's temper certainly improved wonderfully. Instead of threatening the children, she tried to *train* and lead them in the right way. It wasn't easy work, after they had been allowed to run riot so long ; but it was pleasant work, because the mother soon saw the fruit of her labour : the little voices were not raised in angry discussion as they had been ; violent quarrellings ceased ; matters of dispute were not settled with doubled-up fists as of yore, but were taken to father to be settled by him. The children learned to confide in him whom they had once shunned.

Mrs. Cowell soon found the advantage of minding her own home instead of going out to work. She found enough work in her own family to keep her head and hands fully employed ; she now had time to arrange and keep in order tidy clothes, both for Sundays and weekdays, for her children. Neighbours could not point the finger of scorn at them now, and call them "dirty, ragged little creatures ;" they were always neat and respectable-looking. And when Mrs. Cowell cleaned her house nicely, she could keep it clean, now that she was always at home to look after it.

The children had never experienced love for home until the bright "new leaf" was really "turned over," and the house was transformed from a comfortless, pig-stye-looking place into a clean, happy, cheerful home, where peace, and order, and pleasure reigned ! Now it was to them indeed the "happiest spot upon earth." John Cowell had many a hard struggle to drag his family

up this hill of comfort. At the outset he told his worthy friend, George Parry, what hard work it was, and how he sometimes felt tempted to give it up and return to the old ways. And George Parry had urged him to ask help and strength of God. He said, "We are but poor weak creatures in ourselves, John, and we never know *how* weak we are until we begin to do battle with self and sin. But we are not to grow weary and despairing because the battle is a long and hard one, for God has promised to give us as much strength and wisdom as we need if we ask Him for these blessings." Then John told George that he never prayed, and did not know how to ; and George told him that it was just earnestly asking God for what we felt our need of ; and that it was no matter how plain and homely the language was, because God understands the simplest form of speech, and He takes notice of what the *heart desires* more than of the words in which those desires find utterance.

And so John Cowell did not set about reformation work in his own strength. All along he had God to help him, and that is the reason why he succeeded so well and kept on so bravely.

George Parry had frequent conversations with John, and he tried to prevail on him to begin family worship. He said, "It will subdue your children as much as anything could do, John ; and when they go out into life the remembrance of the peaceful times of earnest prayer will cling to them, and perhaps be the means of preserving them many a time from evil."

And John made the resolution to begin, and he carried it out too. At first his prayers were very short and nervous, but as time passed on he gained more courage, and the few minutes devoted to family prayer every day were reckoned as among the happiest that the parents and children ever spent together.

Mrs. Cowell soon got herself tidy clothes for Sunday, and every Sabbath the family attended a place of worship. It was in the summer that John set himself the task of creating a happy home. Well, the summer passed away ; the beautiful autumn came and went, and

winter set in. How pleasant the winter evenings were! In the snug, comfortable little kitchen, with the curtains drawn, the bright fire roaring in the grate, and everything around them clean and comfortable, sat the little family. Perhaps Fanny would be sitting on the bit of carpet before the fire, amusing the baby with wooden bricks, which her father and brothers had made for building mimic castles. John would have his boys at the table, studying with them, or forming a puzzle map of England and Wales—for I must let you know that John sometimes managed to spare a shilling or two to purchase any useful and pleasing article to interest his boys. And they dearly loved their puzzle-map.

Then sometimes they had drawing. Mr. Cowell took in two or three cheap illustrated periodicals every month, such as the *British Workman*, the *Band of Hope Review*, or the *Cottager*, and the beautiful engravings in these papers were their drawing copies. John himself tried his hand at some of these drawings, but he had to be very patient, for in trying to get the right expression of a face he frequently made a man look as though he was crying when he ought to have been laughing, and this blunder was sure to make the boys laugh merrily. John was quite as much amused at his own awkwardness as they were, and he would quietly rub out the mouth and eyes on his drawing paper, and set to work again to get the right expression. Both he and the boys made very creditable progress in drawing in one winter.

And sometimes they had music in evenings. Robert had a small concertina, to buy which he had been obliged to save up odd halfpence and pence, which he was able to earn sometimes for doing errands, &c. It had taken him many long months to save up enough for the much longed-for instrument, but at last, with a little kind assistance from his father, he had enough to buy the concertina. And then how pleased he was to learn to play the beautiful tunes which he had been in the habit of singing.

James had a small flute, upon which he was able to perform very nicely. He and Robert frequently played

together, and made beautiful melody. Sometimes Mr. and Mrs. Cowell and the younger children would join in singing while the boys played, and they had really nice little concerts among themselves.

At such times, if John ever thought of the public-houses that he used to spend his evenings in, of the stifling stench of stale beer and tobacco-smoke, of the foolish discussions and empty songs that he joined in, it was only with disgust and loathing that he thought of these things. The "pleasures," as they were falsely called, in which he once took part, would not bear the slightest comparison with the pure and real pleasures of a happy home. At Christmas, John and his wife, after a great deal of cogitation, resolved to ask Mr. and Mrs. Parry and their four children to spend Christmas Eve with them. Oh, it was such an event in the Cowells' life to ask friends to tea! If the queen had been going to pay them a visit I don't think the little Cowells could have talked more about it: and when the veritable evening arrived there was such a to-de as you never saw!

They spent a very pleasant time, and before parting carol-singing was proposed, and they had quite a concert. They sang a lot of old Christmas carols; and, after a time, "Home, Sweet Home," was asked for. Fanny's eyes brightened when she heard the name of her favourite song. All could now join heartily in singing

"Home, home, sweet, sweet home,
There's no place like home, there's no place like home."

When nine o'clock came, Mrs. Cowell served out a cup of hot fragrant coffee to each one, with a slice of cake or bread and butter. She could not afford to prepare a supper of meat or anything of the sort, but her nicely-made coffee, and homely cake and bread, gave entire satisfaction. And after spending a happy evening with their humble neighbours, the Parrys took their leave.

On New Year's eve they returned the compliment, and invited their friends, the Cowells, to spend the evening with them. Then there was all the pleasant excitement over again. Mr. and Mrs. Parry entertained

their visitors admirably. William's ship was shown, and, of course, greatly admired.

These simple social gatherings seemed to do both families good. They elevated them, and made them feel an interest in each other which otherwise they probably would not have felt. Giving and receiving visits *too often* is bad for persons of any class; it keeps a home in a continual ferment, and often drags sadly at the family purse, but it is well for nicely-conducted families to open their doors now and then to respected neighbours.

One day, John told his friend George that he was beginning to feel that "ambition" which he had once spoken to him about; and he really hoped that he would yet be able to live in a house of his own, and be a master-man. He further told him that to attain to this he was not only hoping, but *striving*.


Just as the Parrys exerted a beautiful influence over the Cowells, the latter are in their turn influencing those around them. Neighbours in squalid and comfortless houses, say,—“Well, if Cowells set themselves to rights, I should think *we* could.”

Example, dear friends, does far more than precept.

If my readers are parents who have uncomfortable homes, let me say that it is in your power to make them better. I have told you how beautifully Mr. and Mrs. Cowell improved theirs, and made it pleasant and happy, that you may imitate them.

Begin *to-day!* and as you go on striving in your good work, don't get discouraged. Determine, in God's strength, that from henceforth you will live and labour to this end,—that both yourselves and your children may be able to say of your dwelling-place, “HOME, SWEET HOME!”

THE GOOD MOTHER.

“ND so you would like a nice book to read while you are laid aside and not able to amuse yourself ! Well, I might have guessed that, to be sure ; but tell me what kind of book it is to be, and I will not forget it again, Mrs. Groves, I assure you,” said a good-natured looking lady to a pale, delicate-looking young woman, with whom she seemed to be well acquainted.

“Oh, a nice story, if you please, ma’am : I gets so dull at times lying here all alone with only baby ; I want something to amuse me and cheer me up a bit. If you had a book now that’s a kind of a history of some wonderful person, I’d like that ; and it would do me a deal more good than all the medicine in the world.”

“Well, I must see,” replied Miss Lucan, smiling ; “you want a story about a wonderful person ! I must make a note of that. But then, suppose we don’t agree, and I think some one very wonderful and very excellent, whom you don’t think so at all—what’s to be done ? I was just thinking, however, that, as I forgot your book, I might perhaps *tell* you a story that would answer the same purpose for one afternoon. Would you be too tired to hear it ?”

“Oh no, ma’am, indeed I wouldn’t ; and I’d

be so pleased if you'd stay a bit ; and baby's fast asleep, an' all. Please begin, ma'am."

But now, before Miss Lucan does begin, I must first tell my reader a little about her ; how she was one of the very kindest of all kind ladies, and spent nearly all her time in the houses that made up this long narrow court, in one of which lay our sick friend. Yet she was a person that had plenty of money, and no family cares ; so that, if she had felt disposed, she might have spent all her time in amusing herself : but I am glad to say that this was not her taste, and that she preferred to have plenty to do, and loved making friends among the poor.

I don't say that these were her great reasons for living the life that she had chosen ; she had much higher and better ones ; but every one could not understand these, although they could all see that, deformed as she was, it was no easy work for her to be always in and out, and up and down those dark, narrow staircases, and were forced to confess that it was uncommonly kind and good-natured of her to do as she did.

"She's none o' your meddling sort, that people talk so much about, though I can't say I ever saw 'em ; but she's a rale good woman, that she is," said Groves to his wife after he had let Miss Lucan out one day ; "and I'm right glad you've got such a friend to come and see you now you've took to be so sickly-like."

And Sarah Groves was right glad too, as any

one might have guessed if they had seen the flush of pleasure that came over her face when the good lady offered to stay with her.

"Well," she said, "I must begin at once then, or I sha'n't have time; but mind, I will not promise that you will like my story. *I* was very fond of the woman that I am going to tell you about, and thought her quite a *heroine*; but perhaps *you* won't see anything particular in her."

"Oh, I daresay I shall," said Sarah; "only I don't know what a heroine is."

Miss Lucan laughed, and said, "It's a fine word, isn't it? But what I mean by it is, that I consider that my poor friend, Ann Smith, was a person of a very brave spirit, and that she did many remarkable and noble actions, which deserve to be remembered and talked about. In short, she was a wonderful woman, and I only wish that there were more like her.

"Now, perhaps it may interest you to know that she once lived in this very street, and that it was in one of these houses that I first saw her twelve years ago."

"Was it, indeed, ma'am?" said Sarah, in surprise; "and pray tell me which it was."

"No, that would not be right at all; and I should not have told you her name either, only that it is such a common one that it would not help you if you wished to be too inquisitive. There are at least twelve of the same name living in this street now; and I sometimes tell

them that their names are of no use, and that they might as well have none at all.

"My first visit to Ann I shall never forget. It was in the middle of a very hard winter, and on a bitterly cold afternoon; and I went there because some one said that the family would be glad of some coal tickets, which I was entrusted to give away. So I found my way up to Mrs. Smith's room; and I will begin by giving you a description of that, in the first place; for it made such an impression on my mind that I could even now almost draw you a picture of it as it looked the very first moment I saw it. This may have been owing to my having just left two of the most miserably dirty and untidy families that ever were seen; but certainly I thought that I had never in my life seen such a picture of order and cleanliness in the midst of the very deepest poverty; and I felt sure at once that some people, who were very different to the ordinary run, lived there.

"I knocked rather too gently, for my hands were numbed with the cold; but although my tap did not make the inmates aware of my presence, it pushed the door a little open, so that, during the minute that I waited and hesitated whether I should disturb them or not, I got a glance at the room within; and I don't think that I should ever have forgotten that room even if I had never seen it again.

"The mistress of the little home was sitting

on a low stool, and crouching, with an infant in her arms, over the expiring remains of a little fire, so that I only saw her back. But, seated by the little round table in the middle of the room, sat a little girl of perhaps twelve years of age. There was a basket of socks by her side, which she had evidently just finished mending; but she was then bending over what seemed a hymn-book, and engaged in learning a lesson. Her thoughts seemed, however, to be elsewhere; and as she leant her pale, thin face on her hand, the tears were gushing between her fingers, and some had fallen on her book. She looked, at least, half starved, and was shivering with cold; yet she was evidently trying to forget these things, and to give her mind to the lesson before her. She had on but few clothes, but they were quite a wonder to look at, so patched, so tidy, and yet so very old. In one corner also lay two little languid, hungry-looking children, perhaps kept in bed that they might feel their hunger the less; and in two other corners there were beds also—or rather in one a good-sized bedstead, with an old screen beside it, and in the other a large roll of things that I knew would be made into a bed at night. I saw, too, that there were hooks and curtains by each of the little beds: so that this one room would be made into three every night.

“But what so particularly struck me was the wonderful order of the whole room;—walls,

boards, and furniture, were all as clean as it was possible to conceive; and the table and two chairs were bright and well rubbed, while everything seemed to have a place, and to be in its place. There were two or three little stools, which looked like home-made ones, and a little shelf of the same kind for books; and nails, and pegs in the different corners, on which to hang up clothes or any odd things; and there was one large square box, which I guessed was meant to hold other clothes, and on which stood several articles, such as a wash-hand basin, a little box of sand, a jug of water, a flat-iron, a tea-tray, a pincushion, and one or two other things which would be wanted for cooking when there was anything to cook; but clearly the room was not then likely to be too full of either victuals or clothes.

“There was no rubbish corner visible, and not a single thing out of its place. Still the look of desolation and want about the whole place went to my very heart; and indeed I afterwards found that I had happened to call just when things were at their very worst, and when the family were almost in despair.

“I said that *I happened* to call; but Ann Smith herself never used that word; she always, in after days, when she referred to this visit, said that the Lord had sent me there that day, as He once sent the ravens to feed Elijah, to prevent them all from perishing, and to show that

He never forgets His people, although, when things come to such an extremity, they are apt to think that He has forsaken them.

“Well, I told you that I saw all that was in the room at one glance ; my eyes, you say, are very sharp, and they have a good deal of practice this way. However, I could not stand there looking on without making my presence known, so in a minute I tapped again, and my tap startled the girl from her dreamy mood, and she instantly jumped up, colouring, and brushing away the tears from her eyes, and exclaimed, ‘Mother, here’s a lady wants you ;’ at which the poor woman turned round also, and with some difficulty rose from her seat, folding her infant closer to her breast, and looking, as she did so, almost too faint and ill to be roused by anything.

“I saw starvation in her face, and was so shocked at her appearance, that in my eagerness to bring comfort and hope to her mind, I hastily said,

“‘I heard, Mrs. Smith, that you were badly off for coals, and have brought you a ticket or two ;’ and I was going to suggest that some one should be got to fetch them directly, and to ask about their food, but at these first words a faint colour rushed to her face, then instantly left it again ; she staggered against the table, and with a murmured ‘Thank God,’ would have fallen to the ground, had not the girl and I rushed forward, and caught her and the child.

“You may be sure that the poor girl was dreadfully frightened, and that we were quite at a loss what to do with her mother. But happily the screams of the little ones in bed soon brought in two strong Irishwomen, who lived in the next room; and they, with all the warmth of their kindly nature, quickly lifted the poor creature on to the bed, chafed her frozen limbs, and got everything necessary to restore animation. With their help, we soon found means of getting a good fire, and some warm food for the famishing party; and when the poor, worn, and weary father came in soon after from his fruitless search after employment, you may judge of his amazement to see his wife laid upon the bed, and being fed by one of these kind neighbours, while I sat before the fire with the little babe sleeping in my arms, and the other children were enjoying their nice food at the little round table. It was too much for the poor man; he sank into a chair and cried like a child. So, after whispering to the girl to pour him out a cup of tea and then take the baby, I got away as quickly as possible, promising to come next day and see how they were getting on.

“There was, however, more to be done; for during the confusion I had discovered that on neither bed were there clothes enough to keep warmth in any living creature on such a night as that; so I had to go off for a supply of blankets, which I was able to obtain from the

same society which had given me funds for the coals and food ; and these I told the man would be *lent* them as long as the cold weather lasted.

“So this was my introduction to my poor friend ; and I can see that my story has already made you take an interest in her.”

“Yes indeed, ma'am ; and I should think you wanted bad enough to see them again : but 'twas just you all over, doing all that for them.”

“Well, I don't know why you should say that, Sarah. I didn't buy any of the things with my own money ; and I should have been hardly worthy to be called a human being if I had left them in that state.”

Sarah, however, looked rather knowing, and declared that she knew a good many that would just have given them a shilling, and then left them to die ; but she added, “What puzzles me is how she could have been so poor, and yet kept things so tidy ; why, I should have had no heart at all, and I'm sure you'd have found me in a nice muddle—worse than I am now ; and I know, Miss Lucan, that you don't think I do as well as I might.”

The lady smiled, and replied, “Well, you are not the person whom we are talking about now, you know ; and you remember that I told you that Ann Smith was an uncommon woman. You were quite right, however, in supposing that I was anxious to see her again, for indeed I was very doubtful then whether hunger and cold had

not done their work, and whether help had not come too late for her. So I went as early as I could next morning, and was greatly rejoiced to find her decidedly better.

“It would take me a week at least if I were to go on telling you all that passed at each visit which I paid; for there was a sort of charm about that little family that seemed to draw me to their room, and I made many excuses to myself, and to them, for going so often as I did.

“To cut this part of my story rather short, I must tell you that, through some kind friends of mine, regular work was soon found for Smith himself, which, though not very good as to pay, served to carry them all pretty well through the winter; and then by degrees we got a little employment for the elder children too; and so in time the family began to get back their things, and to look quite happy and comfortable, and, as they said, they used to be. The two biggest boys, who were fourteen and eleven years old, each got little places, one to clean knives, and the other to run errands; and their employers, who really took them out of charity, soon found them such handy, steady little fellows, that they would not hear of parting with them again, even when spring came, and the mother thought that little Billy must go back to school and finish his learning.

“‘I don’t see why,’ said his master; ‘he is very forward for his age, reads and writes well,

and is quick at figures. You look after him in the evenings, I know ; and if you give him nice books to read, and make his brother work him well at his writing and sums, it'll do them both good. I would not advise the plan for many boys ; but there are not many that have been brought up as he has been, or that have such mothers to look after them, Mrs. Smith. And you are not so strong as you were, and want all the comforts you can have. Billy is an independent little man, and you have worked long enough for him. Set him on his own legs now, and let him do for himself, and so help you all. It's better for him to be getting his breakfast and dinner without costing you anything than to throw up his place, and not be able to get another when hard times set in again. No, no, let him stay, and just send him to the Sunday school regularly, and I'll supply him with plenty of good reading, and then he'll do well enough.'

"So it was settled : both boys kept their places ; and their sister was supplied with needlework ; and so they grew up an industrious and independent little set, and proud enough their parents were of them all."

"But that girl couldn't get much by her needlework," said Sarah Groves ; "children of twelve years old ain't often much of hands at it, and they're so slow too."

"That often depends on how they are taught," returned Miss Lucan ; "Nelly Smith was not a

bad hand, nor a slow one either, I can tell you. I only wish you had seen a set of little petticoats that she once made for a little niece of mine ; you couldn't have wished for nicer work ; and they were all tucked too, and done so quickly that we were quite surprised."

"But wasn't it rather a shame for her mother to keep a child of that age so close to her sewing? Why, there's nothing so bad for the health!"

"Oh, Nelly was not kept so *very* close, I assure you ; there was too much cleaning and tidying up and going of errands for that. She had plenty of exercise, and was never dull ; for when she had got all else finished, and sat down in an afternoon to her work, her mother took care to make it cheery for her ; and whenever she could, she'd sit down and work too ; and then Nelly would say over to her all the texts, hymns, and little pieces of poetry she had learnt at school, or which she was learning for the next Sunday. Sometimes, too, her mother would make her say over her multiplication table, or little bits of geography, such as the names of the countries of Europe and their chief towns, or the counties of England, or all that she could remember about the Holy Land, and the towns and rivers and mountains which we read of in the Bible. And so the time used to pass very pleasantly, and Nelly had begun to do needle-work so young, and had done so much for her

mother and brothers and sisters that she rather liked it, and was quite expert at it.

“Some of the little ones were at school most of the day, so then they got a quiet time, especially if baby had a nice sleep in the afternoon; but there was one little thing who could not go to school, for he was always too sickly, and could not bear the noise of the number of young voices. It was difficult sometimes to keep him contented and amused, and it required a great deal of ingenuity to do it, as no one had time to sit and devote herself to him. He was Nelly’s great pet, and she would certainly have liked now and then to put away her work, and have a game with him. And so she should, her mother used to say, if she was working for anything more than their daily bread; but as it was, it would not be right. And Nelly felt this; so her games were confined to the little bits of fun which they could have together when she took him out for a walk, or when she was keeping him happy by getting him to help her to dust and rub the few little pieces of furniture which they possessed. But he was a gentle little boy, and grew to be very fond of his sister, and would often be very pleased to sit by her side, spelling out words with some card letters, which his brother had made to please him, or trying to make straight lines and round O’s on his brother’s slate. And then Nelly would talk to him, and sometimes very prettily her mother

told me, and teach him little verses which they sang at the infant school, or tell him Bible stories, such as he could understand ; and so the little learner, and the little teacher too, both learnt a great deal."

"Well," said Sarah, "they must have been a wonderful family indeed ; and if you had not said you knew 'em all, ma'am, why I'd have wondered whether it could all be true. Dear me ! why, I've read about gentlefolks spending their time like that, but I never saw people like *them* myself. Why, look at all the houses down here. There ain't many that live in one room where there's a family ; and yet I don't know one that goes on like that. Why, the tidiest room that I know would be a pigstye to Mrs. Smith's ; and as to the children, some of 'em goes to school, and some doesn't ; but there's very few that earns a penny, or could make themselves useful like your little Nelly."

"Well, Sarah, then all that just proves that what I said was true, and that my old friend was an uncommon person, and did things worthy of being remembered. Don't you see now that it was all the fruit of her good training of her children that made them what they were ? A mother can do so much, and so much more than any one else, if she only tries and *gives her mind to it*. Now, Sarah, you are a mother too, therefore you have a great work before you. Did you ever think of how much the happiness

and usefulness of your little babe's future life depends on you?"

The young woman coloured a little, and looked fondly at her sweet infant; and then she answered in an open, honest way,

"No, ma'am, I can't say that I have thought much about it. I know that I love him better than any one else can do; but somehow I always think that I am too silly and ignorant to do much for him by-and-bye, and I feel as if he must get all his learning from some one else."

"Book learning is not the only thing, Sarah," said Miss Lucan, kindly; "and depend upon it that if you leave your work to others, it will mostly go undone. No one can quite fill a mother's place. Did you ever hear the saying, which I think a very true one, that, 'Every great man has had a great mother, and every good man a good one?'"

"Oh dear," said Sarah, "then I'm afraid that my boy will be neither good nor great; for I'm sure that I'm neither one nor the other."

"As to that," returned Miss Lucan, "I do not want you to *think yourself* great or good; it would be much wiser for you to try to become so. And I think that if you are not too proud to learn, you may get a good many hints from the story of my *heroine*—you recollect the meaning of that word, don't you? So now I am going to tell you what she once told me of the history of her early life."

“Oh, I shall like to hear that very much indeed. I suppose that she had a great many advantages when she was a child. Had *she* a very good mother, ma’am?”

“I am not sure; and you know I did not say that every good *woman* had a good mother; it was *men* I spoke of. But however, I should hope that it was so in Ann Smith’s case; for, from the little things that she could recollect, she said that she felt sure that her mother had loved her Saviour, and taught her to love Him too; but she died when Ann was only six years old; and afterwards she was left to the care of a very poor woman, who had told her mother that she would look after the child; and as she had no father, nor any relations who would talk to her of what her mother used to do and say, the remembrance of those things soon became very faint. There was a little prayer which she used to repeat for years, and which she could never remember learning; so she supposed that her mother had taught her that. And she recollected perfectly that she would never let her be dirty or untidy, and that she used to make her brush up every bit of dirt or mud that people might bring in when they came to see her; and also that her good friend used to say that she had seen better days, and would have fretted sadly if she thought her girl would turn out a slut. ‘’Twas your mother made yer such a tidy little lass; I never seed one like yer,’ was

her praise when Ann had pleased her very much. 'Sure it was her wanted yer to go to the ragged school, Sunday an' all, or I'd never ha' sent yer, for yer'd better by half not learn nor go wi' a set like them.'

"But little Ann did not think so; she delighted in her school, and clean as she was, she thought it worth while to put up with a good deal, in order to be taught 'by such kind ladies and learn such pretty lessons;' she knew that if she didn't go there she could not go to school at all, because there was never a penny to spare for schooling, and her adopted mother could not read, and knew nothing of things like that.

"It was a night-school, however, that she attended; for the child was obliged, even at that age, to earn her daily bread. The woman who took care of her kept a fruit-stall at the corner of one of the neighbouring streets; and when she went to market to lay in her stock, the child went also to make her little purchases of flowers, which she afterwards made up into her own tiny nosegays, and sold about the streets. And so from six to eighteen this was her manner of life; and its trials, dangers, and temptations, perhaps you who have lived in a comfortable service, and had kind parents, can scarcely know. There was the scorching heat of summer, and the piercing cold as well as the wet of winter, to be borne day after day; and then there was the uncertainty of her little

trade, which would sometimes bring in enough, and sometimes nothing like enough, to keep away the pangs of hunger. And there was, too, the lawless wickedness and rudeness of those with whom she was constantly thrown; and all these things were made doubly bitter by that lonely, lonely feeling that seemed only to increase with her years, as she became more and more sensible of having no one in the wide world who really cared for her and loved her.

"Surely, but for the goodness of God, little Ann Smith must have grown up a low and hardened woman, instead of turning out what she was when I knew her. It is true that old Molly Black, the woman who looked after her as a child, was pretty tolerably respectable, and did as well as she could by the child; but even while she lived she was out most of the day; besides, she died when Ann was only twelve. But it was the ragged school which was always the bright spot in her young life; there she found kind friends, learnt to read, and got a Bible of her own; there also she learnt to go to the house of God regularly twice every Sunday.

"But all these things *by themselves* would not have proved sufficient to keep her 'from the evil that was in the world;' for although she was taught the 'things which are able to make us wise unto salvation,' told that she was a sinner, and pointed to a Saviour, yet if this knowledge had gone no further than her head, she would

have been, not better, but rather the worse for having it, because she would then have sinned wilfully and against the light, instead of in ignorance.

“But happily (and who can say how happily for her?), it was not so. The good seed did not fall into barren ground, but into a heart prepared and made ready by God Himself. Her mother had earnestly wished her to go to this school; ‘It was a fancy of hers,’ old Molly would say, and ‘she’d be the last to cross it.’ But why it was that school in particular no one ever knew. I believe she prayed a great deal for the child before her death, and the answer was not long withheld; for it seems that, from the time of Ann’s first going to school, the instruction that she received was blessed. She thought so herself, and used to tell me how very much she was touched by her first lessons about the Saviour’s love to a poor little girl like her, and how she used often to wonder at it for hours together, as she stood waiting for customers in the streets; and how she used to grieve at her own coldness and hardness of heart, that seemed to feel so little when Jesus had done so much for her. Sometimes it seemed impossible that He could care for one who was so ungrateful; and she would have been quite in despair but for some pretty lines which would come into her mind just when she felt inclined to give up all hope.

“Her teacher had told her one day that she must go to Christ *just as she was*, and not wait until she was good enough to go, for that

‘If we wait until we’re better,
We shall never come at all ;’

and she had given her a pretty hymn, which had this verse in it—

‘Just as I am, and waiting not
To cleanse my soul from one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O, Lamb of God, I come.’

It was made on purpose for her, of that she was quite sure, and she made up her mind to act upon it that very day. Then it seems that a very happy feeling came into her mind ; and she resolved, that if ever such as she might call herself a child of God, and a servant of Jesus, she would certainly try very hard to please Him, and to be an obedient child and a good servant. And after this came a strength and a courage which she could not understand ; and it seemed worth while now to try to be the very best child at school, and the neatest and most civil little flower girl that ever stood in the streets of London. And the thought would now come into her mind that after all, poor and lonely as she was, there were many much worse off than she—some even that she knew, who had to live with cruel and drunken people, and were never sent to a nice school like hers, and many that never had heard of her dear Saviour. So now,

when the lady who taught her would begin to talk to her of making the most of the advantages which she had, and of trying to become as clever as she could in everything that she learnt, in order that she might grow up to be a useful woman by-and-bye, and tell her that *even she* had talents, for which she would have to account one day or other—then she would begin to count them over to herself, until they seemed to her very many and very great.

“Little did these good ladies know what thoughts their words would put into her mind, or guess that the reason why she learnt to read so fast, and was so eager to pick up every scrap of knowledge that she could, was because she had already begun to consider all the ways in which she might use her knowledge.

“At once she set to work to read to her good mother Molly, and to tell her the glad tidings which she had learnt herself, and then she felt that she must try what good they would do to some very bad children who were the plague of her young life. Besides, she often thought that perhaps one day she might have children of her own, and then how much she might do for them if she only really knew how to teach and train them, and keep them out of the streets, so that they should never have to do as she had done.”

“Dear me!” said Sarah, laughing, “to think of a child like that having such thoughts in her head! But I suppose she soon forgot them.”

“No, indeed ; if she had, she would never have been the woman she was. Ann used often to tell me how thankful she felt that she was taught to look at things in this way, though, she would add, that she knew she should soon have forgotten everything if God had let her, but ‘He was so kind He wouldn’t leave me,’ although she would add she had ‘the wickedest heart that ever a child possessed,’ and used to be always getting tired of doing right, and wanting to go this way and that ; but it would not do.

“And so she grew up ; and though she had but a struggling life of it, yet she said she got many a help and many a comfort in her young days ; and chief of all she reckoned it, that old Molly died a real christian, and was so happy in thinking of the mansion and the company to which she was going.

“‘I had a lonely life for a bit after that for certain,’ said Ann ; ‘but when some of my ladies that bought my flowers found out that I was all alone, they took to be kinder than ever ; and by-and-bye, I found out a girl who went to the same night-school, and was alone too ; and so I thought that, as she was very steady, it would be nice for us to get a little room and live together, if we could pay the rent between us. So we got a little place, and were very comfortable, only at first Betty was very untidy, and did not keep things as I’d been used to have ’em. By degrees, however, I coaxed her, and shewed her :

and at last, in about a year, a kind lady came and asked us both what we could do ; and she looked how we had scrubbed our floor, and done up the hearth, and then she said that she had found two very nice places, which she thought would just suit us.

“ ‘ The people where we went each kept little shops, and were very kind and good ; and we had to go and keep the place clean and tidy, and to look after the children. We were both very happy, and so glad to get out of the street. Betty took a better place after a time ; but I thought I’d rather stay than go among strangers again ; and I learnt a great many things there that have been very good for me ever since. And so I stopped on until I met John, and we took a liking to one-another, and got married. But we didn’t do it in a hurry though, for we wanted to know what each other was like ; and I was afraid that John mightn’t be so good when I saw more of him, and he was the same about me. But we had gone to the same place of worship, and I used to see him helping in the school-room when there were meetings ; and so at last I made up my mind, and we were married ; and I’m sure that, though he’s only a labouring man, and gets little wages enough sometimes, yet for all that we’ve been as happy as any two people could be. And, thanks to my good bringing up, I knew how to manage by that time, and could make money go pretty far.

So some of the neighbours thought we lived too grand like, and used to say unkind things, which were very hard to bear: but we thought the best way was to be kind to them, and then they'd be kind to us in time; and so it came about.

“There were some of the most decent women about us, that used to pride themselves on keeping themselves to themselves, and having nothing to do with nobody; but I never could see that that was a christian-like way of living at all, nor more could John. 'Twasn't that we wanted to make *friends* with them that wasn't steady; but we thought that when we had a chance of doing them any good, we ought not to lose it. And I know my man has got many another to go with him to public worship that never would have gone without. And at last we thought it would be nice and cheery if we could get up a little party to come to our room, and read a chapter together at times. So we did; and it did us all a world of good, and was better than if we had lived like two bears, and never spoken even to the folks in the next room.'

“But I must not go on like this,” said Miss Lucan. “I have told you how my good friend began life, and how she got over many difficult parts of the road; but now I want just to tell you more of what she was when I knew her.”

“Will you think me very silly if I ask you what sort of looking woman she was?” said Sarah, interrupting her.

“No, not at all, Sarah. I always like to know what people look like myself. I wish I had described her before ; for very likely you have been thinking of her as some great coarse-looking person, instead of what she was—a small, pale, placid-looking woman, not pretty, but with a very pleasant, thoughtful look in her clear blue eye, and a quiet voice, that seemed to make the children mind much better than all that screaming would I so often hear from the mothers down this street. A gentle voice is a good thing in any woman, Sarah, even in the poorest ; and it was by her *gentle firmness* that Ann Smith got all her influence. You would never hear that slapping and banging in her room that some women think so necessary to make children mind them. She would correct hers when they needed it, but not in that angry tone and manner which is so frightful, and does so much harm ; yet she always *would* have them obedient, and began to teach them that lesson when they were mere babies, saying that everything else came easy if that were once learnt.

“But you asked me what she looked like, so I must not forget one great point, namely, that she always looked clean and neat. ‘Go in when yer will, ma’am,’ said Smith to me one day, ‘you’ll never catch my wife dirty, any more than you’ll catch her smart ; she doesn’t think that flowers and flounces make a working woman look a bit well ; and she says they only make the ladies

laugh at 'em ; but she does like to have clean cotton gowns all day and every day as well as Sundays, and clean caps too ; and she likes her gowns to fit her well ; and so she spends the little she does in useful clothes, and that ain't much, because she's so clever-like at mending and contriving.' I was rather amused at this speech from a man, but it shewed how much they think of such things, and besides, it was quite true. Somehow or other, Ann always looked nice ; and her clothes seemed to become her, and set her off without any finery. I think that some of your neighbours would follow her example if they could have seen how much her own boys admired her. I've heard them say very often, ' Mrs. So-and-so is smart enough, but for all that she don't look *nice* like mother : ' and the little ones would climb on her knee, and say, ' Nice smooth hair ; mother got nice hair,' and then run off to smooth their own. Oh, Sarah, people think too much about dress down here in one way, but they don't think enough in another. They don't seem to understand how important it is that men and boys should always have nice comfortable-looking wives and mothers in their homes, and not find dirty slatterns, with red flowers in their caps, fuming and scolding when they go home tired at night.

" Smith used to tell his boys that they would never know how much they owed to their mother ; and when, after her death, the whole

family determined to go and settle in Australia, he told me before they sailed, that he only wished his lads were older, and could take wives with them, 'for,' he said, 'they'd never find any to their taste out there—*their mother had made them so particular.*'

"However, I hear that they have found some very good ones, and are getting on bravely, and likely soon to be two of the most substantial farmers in the colony, as well as excellent men, who try to do good wherever they go.

"The handy little Nelly is settled also, and has her father living with her; but I don't quite know what has become of the little ones."

"Ah, but you did not tell me anything about Ann's death, nor how they all got on after you got them out of their trouble," exclaimed Sarah. "I want to know more about them all."

"I found that it was getting so late that I jumped to the conclusion quicker than I intended, because I wanted you to know how much this excellent woman was the means of accomplishing," returned the lady. "You shall hear all that I know another day; but now I must tell you a few things more.

"I used to go in to see her very often, as I told you, and was often surprised at her clever contrivances, and at the pains she took about every little thing. 'Little or great,' she would say, 'it's a duty, I think; and "mony a little maks a mickle," as the Scotch folks say. I

don't think anything seems little either, if you do it for the sake of Jesus and for those you love. Besides, I want my children to grow up *healthy* and *handy*, and to be able to do well enough for themselves to be kept from the temptations that I was in when I was young. And though I can't give them money, I can put them in the way of earning it, and of knowing how to use it when they get it, which is the great thing after all.'

"Sometimes I would ask her how she could keep that little room so sweet, and clean, and orderly as it was whenever I went in; and she would answer that 'it was not so difficult as I thought, for if it was a small place for so many, still it was but *one* that she had to see to, and she was always in it to look after everything.'

"The thing is to have a proper place for everything, and to put everything in its place as soon as it is done with. If I let the children throw things about, there would be no end to it; but they're so used to putting them away that it's part of their nature now, and I never have to tell them. And as to keeping the room sweet, why we always liked air, and are used to it; and we keep the window open a good part of most days in the year, and at night too, for the matter of that, though some would be frightened to death to do so. But I think it's worse to sleep in a close place, and it makes one so weak. In summer we open it a good piece, but not at the

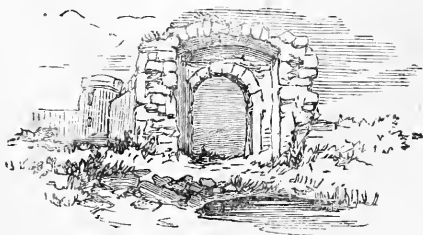
bottom—that makes a draught; but we open it at the top, and if it's windy we let the blind down over it; and so even in winter we have it open a wee bit, unless it's bitter cold.

“‘It makes a wonderful difference, I know, and we don't catch cold so easily as when we kept it shut at nights, and so got over-hot, and ready to faint by the morning.

“‘Then if you want to keep a room sweet, you must be careful about the clothes you work in; and that's one reason why I always wear cotton gowns; woollen ones *will* get so musty. But men and boys can't have cotton coats; so the *only* way is to brush them, and shake them well, to clean them, and then hang them outside the door or out of the window to air. We never leave them about at night; they're put away either into the cupboard or into the great box, for if they weren't they'd make the room smell close. It wants a deal of care,' she said, 'but it's all easy when you're used to it.'

“Well, so they went on, and I got very fond of them all, and so interested in seeing how nicely the children were getting on; but after a time, my poor friend fell ill with an incurable disease, which in a few months brought her to the grave. I must tell you about her illness and death another time, for you would be interested by many things she said, I know; but it was her *life*, and not her *death*, that I wanted to tell you about to-day.

“I will not ask you to tell *me* now whether you think Ann Smith an uncommon character or not; you can make up your mind about that before I come to see you again. Only remember one thing, if you are disposed to set her down as too strict and too precise to be a pattern for other women, and that is, that if we take the Bible for our guide, and believe what it says to be true, we must not conclude that we shall be excused for the neglect of any duty just because it is disagreeable or difficult; for the word of God speaks of the Christian’s life as *a race*, which *must* be run with *all our might*: so that if any one is content to take life easily, to go with the stream, and do like the rest of the world, *that person cannot be a Christian at all.*”



HOUSEHOLD HAPPINESS.

NOTHING is more pleasant than to see "holiday people" bursting forth, like bees from their hives of industry, at Easter or Whitsuntide, for it is then that Nature seems to rise again from her winter death-sleep, and to welcome them with gleams of sunshine and opening flowers. Their clean attire, their happy looks, their cheerful nods and recognitions, their hearty shakes of the hand when they meet friends or acquaintance, and the thousand little kindnesses which they exercise towards each other as they pass along, are especially delightful to the observer; and he who wants a day's pleasure himself cannot do better than mingle with "holiday people" in their diversions.

In my early days I did so, and I do so still; for to see others happy is a happiness to me at all times. I remember going, one holiday time, to Greenwich, to ramble in the park, and to see the sports and fun beneath the old chesnut trees, of young men and maidens, old men and children, who gamboled there, and who ran down the hill, and played "kiss in the ring" with an extacy indescribable. On one of these holiday visits to Greenwich, a little circumstance occurred which made a strong impression on me, and which I think may not inappropriately be applied to the introduction of this subject.

Ascending the walk from the town, I soon got into the park and up the hill on which the observatory stands.

It was a fine, bright, sunny morning, and the birds were singing on every tree. It was barely noon; the holiday people had not yet arrived; the old pensioners, who ply there to ferry the eye up and down the river with their "spy glasses," were all ready for action as they called it; and I took my stand behind one of them to see the holiday people come up, and to hear their acclamations of surprise as they looked through the "spy glasses," as they were then called. I soon found that the great object of attraction was a sight of "*the men in chains*." These were the bodies of pirates, suspended on gibbets by the river side, to warn sailors against crimes on the high seas; and it was a sad and dismal sight to look at them, especially when, to do so, we had to turn from the blooming trees and lovely flower beds and the daisied grass; but the majority of people like the excitement of the dismal rather than of the beautiful.

Well, as I was saying—in every instance, save one, the first sight demanded was "The men in chains;" but there was one exception. An able-bodied sailor, with a new hat on his Saracen-looking head, carrying a handkerchief full of apples in his left hand, with something sticking out of the side of the breast pocket of his jacket for a nosegay, dragged his female companion up the hill with all the might of his right arm and shoulder, and the moment he was at the top assented to the proposal of the telescope keeper for his "good lady" to have a view.

"Give her the 'men in chains' to begin with," quoth the sailor; but the young woman, who seemed a hard-working, neat, modest kind of person, "wanted to see something else first."

"Don't be a fool," said Jack; "see *them* first—it is the *best sight*."

"No, she wouldn't give a fig to see them, not she; she should like to see something a good deal better than that."

Jack tried to persuade her—but no! "she was not to be moved; she should like to see something better than 'men in chains;' and she would see what she liked to see best, and she would see it *first too*."

"Well, if it's no use," said Jack (meaning of no use to argue with her), "what is it you want to see?"

"Why, I want to see," replied the wife—"I want to see our house in 'The Gardens,' with the flower-pots; and I don't see *that* I will see nothing: what's the 'men in chains' to *that*? Give us an apple." She took one out of the bundle, and beginning to eat it, gave instructions for the direction of the instrument towards Greenwich church, whilst Jack fished out a tolerably substantial sausage roll. Long she looked and peered over the chimney tops, and almost gave up the hope of finding what she wanted to see, but on a sudden she screamed out, "Here, Jack, here it is! flower-pots and all; and there's our bed-posts—I left the window open on purpose that I might see them. I declare their polish glitters in the sun; look, do look, pray do."

Jack himself now took an observation. "D'ye see it, Jack?"

"Yes."

"Do you see the flower-pots and the bed-posts?"

"Aye; and—here, Sal, here, here's the cat looking out of the window."

"Come away, Jack," she said, "and let me look again." And then she looked, and talked away as if under a fresh inspiration—"Dear, what a sweet place it is! That's where you and I are happy, Jack—where I make the dumplings, and you smoke your pipe, you know. That's our *happy home*! *that* is the place to look at!"

“Do look at ‘the men in chains,’” said Jack, wishing to impart the popular delight to his little housewife; but no, she wanted no “men in chains,” except the one she had got (that was Jack), and she looked upon her little home as the padlock to that chain, the chartelaine of her mortal joys, the charm of her heart, and she broke forth again with a snatch of the old song, “Home, sweet home;” and Jack kissed her till the apples rolled out of his bundle; and then he pushed her down the hill, and then he pulled her up again; and then she paid for another look at her little “home,” and she and Jack seemed so happy, for they hardly seemed to look at anybody, or care for anybody, nor saw anybody but themselves. They were themselves a sight; and though the woman was far from

“Whatever fair,
High fancy forms, or lovish hearts could wish,”

yet she was ail that to Jack, and all that she seemed to love or care for were “our house,” and the “flower-pots,” and the “bed-posts,” and the “cat,” and Jack:

So, in this mood—and a very happy mood it was—Jack and his wife left the land of the telescopes, and made off for the other enjoyments of the park, and I did the same. I saw nothing of either the whole of the day, but towards evening, just as the sun was setting, and I was coming out of the park gates, I saw the “happy pair” arm-and-arm, hurrying along full sail till they were suddenly brought to by a man-of-war’s-man, fully rigged in the nautical toggery of that day—pumps, glazed hat, turnover shirt collar a quarter-of-an-ell-broad, blue jacket, and a guernsey, on which was worked the word “Salamander.”

“Hallo, my hearty,” said the Salamander, “give us your fin.” Upon which, Jack gave him such a blow on

the palm of his hand as would have stunned most folks, and shook away at his arm as if he had determined to dislocate it. They had not seen each other for seven years. Tom Higgins—for that was the stranger's name—had been boatswain of a fireship that had been at the bombardment of Algiers, and had blown up, to the great satisfaction of Tom, who had thereby something grand to talk about. Well, there was another and another shake of the hand, and a pressing invitation from Tom for Jack to go with him to the "Sea-horse" close by, to which he would have gladly repaired (for he had eaten all his apples, and was very thirsty) had it not been for his wife, who plainly told Tom that Jack knew better than to go there, when he had a "comfortable home of his own," and that a cup of tea would do him more good than a pailful of grog; and while Tom pulled Jack towards the "Sea-horse," Sally pulled him in the direction in which her home lay, and in the last prevailed, not so much by the strength of physical pulling as by her arguments, and the inviting of Tom to go home with them, and to smoke his pipe by their fireside, and to see their house and all the "rattle-traps," as Jack called them, feeling it a duty to chime in with his wife when he knew her to be in the right course.

So at last, after vain endeavours to persuade Jack to take just one glass of rum at the "Sea-horse," Tom agreed to go to Jack's house, partly for old acquaintance sake, and partly to see what sort of a thing married life was, and especially how Jack could accommodate himself to it, considering the wild sort of a blade he had been in the earlier part of his life. "There must be something," thought Tom, "that I am not aware of, for Jack to be led along like a lamb by a string, and that too by a little bit of a woman not above five feet high, and not

over and above handsome besides. So, after a lingering glance at the "Sea-horse," which stood, as it were, beckoning them in, the trio all abreast passed along Greenwich High Street; but before they had got far, there was a second heave-too. A respectable-looking working man stopped them short with a "Ah, Sally, how are you? am glad to see you are well; heard all about your marriage." Then shaking of hands again all round, and—"Come and see us at our own house," from Sally, and so the trio set sail again.

I thought there could be no harm in my asking a few questions about Jack and his wife; so when they were gone, I said to the man who had spoken to them, "That's a happy couple; I suppose they have not been long married."

"No," said the man, "they have not been long out of the honeymoon; and Jack is as happy as a man need be. As to the girl, I have known her for a long time, and she is one of the 'right sort,' I can tell you."

"What do you mean by one of the 'right sort?'" I enquired, not so much that I did not understand what the man meant, as to hear what kind of a construction he might put upon the term.

"Well," he replied, "I mean, by saying that the girl is one of the right sort, that she is a regular good one—a capital wife—lots of good stuff in her—'plenty of work,' and an out-and-outer for looking after the main chance; and as to her house, that would do any one good to look at—you might eat pudding off the floors."

"How did Jack get hold of such a wife?" said I, "for he seems as if he had spent many years at sea."

"So he has," replied the man; "he has been away, off and on, for seven years or more. When he went away about eight years ago, Sally and he had just become 'acquainted.' She was then living as servant at

a coffee house here in Greenwich just by the church, and she had neither father or mother, and came out of the workhouse, where she had been brought up. Well, after Jack took a liking to her, which he did almost at first sight, she used to persuade him to stop at the coffee shop, and drink coffee instead of going to the grog shop; and Jack at last got very fond of the coffee shop, and of the old cat that used to bask in the window there among the flies and the empty coffee tackle which stood in it for show. Jack also got fond of Sally, and she of him, and so the thing was made up between them, that some day or other, when Jack's 'ship came home,' that is, when he got a few shot in the locker, they would get spliced. With this understanding Jack went off to sea; was shipwrecked once, and lost everything he had; then he was taken prisoner by the Algerine pirates, and she lost sight of him for more than a year, thinking he was dead; then he came home without a shoe to his foot or a rag to his back. Sally fitted him out, and off he went to sea again, till at last, after a vast deal of beating about on the ocean of life, Jack came home; and having saved up his wages for a long time, when he came ashore he was not without tin. But what filled him with the greatest astonishment was, that Sally, during the whole time of his coming and going, had saved up her wages too, and also all the wails she had made her, and she made a good deal of the customers, for she waited in the shop, and being very smart and obliging, the gentlemen were pretty liberal to her."

"Then I suppose, when Jack came home, she had a good round sum to throw into his hat as a kind of dowry," said I.

"No she hadn't; she didn't go to work that way. She had made up her mind to Jack; she knew he was faithful, and that he had made up his mind to her: so

what does she do? Jack had a poor old mother, who obtained her living by taking in washing, but who made a very poor thing of it, as she was a sickly woman, and dreadfully troubled with the rheumatics. Sally feeling for the old creature, and having no mother of her own, took to her, and hired her a nice little house, with a good washing place and drying ground behind; and then she began to furnish it, bit by bit as she could, buying 'things' at a cheaper rate this way than by waiting till she had got a lot of money, and then laying it out all at once. Besides, she often picked up things that she had a fancy to; and by these means managed to get the little house she had taken not only very comfortably but very nattily furnished—aye, nice little useful tit-bits of furniture; and so, when Jack came home this last time, there was a beautiful cage for him to sing in, and to smoke in, and for his wife to sing in too—a regular nest already prepared, and lined inside with the feathers of comfort and the down of happiness, as one may say, made entirely by the hen bird out of her little pickings here and there."

"I should like to see this 'nest,'" I remarked.

"That you may easily do," replied the man. "You know I have got an 'invite,' and if you like to join me this evening I will take you to the place, and we can compare notes together, for I have a great desire myself to see how Sally has laid out the concern."

So, after a few more words on the subject, we both of us partook of some refreshment at the identical coffee house at which Sally had scraped together her little fortune, and soon after set out to see what was a great deal better sight to our liking than even the "men in chains."

We had not far to go. The house was a little way off the thickly populated streets at a place called "The

Gardens," where a row of neat cottages had been built in what are called pairs, having a little garden before, and a somewhat larger one behind, the said gardens not containing more than three or four rods of ground in both. Jack's house was dignified by the name of "Trafalgar Cottage." There was a little round bed of flowers in the centre of the "front garden," surrounded by a bright walk of gravel; a jasmin nailed up to the side of the door, just beginning to sprout out; and there were a few tulips in the same condition in the round bed, with daffodils in full blossom, and some pretty polyanthuses, garden daisies, and sweet williams, with other common flowers; and also some bright red flower-pots on the window sill, with ivy, variegated, and horse-shoe geraniums in them. The door was open, for it was a warmish evening, and Jack was sitting on a small keg, which had formerly contained Dantzic spruce, at the side of the door post, smoking his pipe. His eye brightened as he saw us approach through the little garden gate, and he came forward with a sailor's tip-toe-roll towards us, offering his fin to both of us, recognizing me as having seen me on the top of the hill at the observatory. "Here's my cabin," said he, "come in. Sally," he then called out at the top of his voice, "here's Bob Standish and a gent come to see you. Walk in," he continued, "my hearties," addressing us, "walk in, and make yourselves cosy. Here's plenty of tobacco, and some pipes, and some red-hot coffee, which I always drink with my pipe, you see, after the Turkish fashion, which I learned at Constantinople." This was a little bit of a fib of Jack's, who wished to disguise the fact that his wife had strenuously interdicted any "wine, beer, or spirits" on the premises, and also spitting, except in two neat japanned spittoons with earthenware

fittings, which were brought to us as soon as we had fairly taken our seats.

Well, Sally came in, neat and clean to the very essence of nicety. She soon gave us coffee, and then sat down to darning Jack's sea stockings, and she, and Jack, and Standish began to talk about old times; and Jack told the story of his shipwreck, and of his imprisonment, and of his fun and frolic and merriment on ship-board. I continued silent, and spent my time in taking notes of the charms and delights, the comforts and conveniences of the little palace, for so it might with justice be called. There was a nice square piece of carpet under the table where we sat, but the boards all round were as white and clean as a platter. The fireirons were of a glorious polish, and the stove or grate black and shining as the finest ebony. Good elm-tree chairs stood round the room, and, with a polished oak table having a double leaf, bore testimony to the stupendous power of elbow-grease. And up in the corner was a clock, whose case was almost as bright as a mirror, and served as a mirror, for not a looking-glass was to be seen. When Sally opened the door leading out of the front room into the little kitchen behind, I got a glance of pot lids and tin ware almost as brilliant as the display in the shop windows of a London silversmith. And all within and without smelt clean, and wholesome, and sweet. Ah, Jack was indeed a happy man, and a real pleasure it was to me to find that he appreciated his happy home and his good-tempered looking wife; and I did not at all wonder when I heard him say that he intended to go to sea no more, and that he had engaged himself as a "ship carpenter"—his original trade till he "ran away to sea," for the sake of seeing the world. He had never seen, probably, in all his voyages from Nova Zembla to Cape Horn any thing

more beautiful or captivating than his own little home, and so he had wisely determined, as he said, to enjoy it to the best of his ability.

While we were talking, we heard a loud outcry at the garden gate, and looking out, we saw a little child about four or five years old, shrieking at the highest point of the gamut, and holding up its hand and stamping its feet, it cried out, "I have tut my finger, I have tut my finger!" So out runs Sally, brings the child in, and as quick as lightning rushes to a little draw within a bureau, and in a trice she brought out a piece of lint, a short length of twine, and a bottle of friar's balsam, and binding up the cut finger, soon sent the little one to its mother cured and comforted. Ah, the incident told a good tale—there was a place for everything, and everything in its place. No hunting in one draw for a piece of rag, in another for a piece of string, and finding neither; but here both ready to hand, and a bottle of friar's balsam besides. And no doubt, had Sally been suddenly called upon to make up a parcel, she would have found cord and paper as ready to hand, for it was plain that she was provided for many a sudden emergency, and was never without a homely expedient when a necessity arose.

No wonder Jack loved his home, and liked to show it to others; no wonder he was proud of his wife, and of the white boards, the shining table, and the bright pot lids, for they go very far in making a pleasant home. There are many other things to be considered, no doubt, but a woman of the right sort brings every thing to bear upon this one object—to make home the most loving place in the whole world, so that all other places—the haunts of pleasure, the public-house parlour, the club meeting, the skittle ground, bowls, the card table—are as nothing in comparison with it. If a woman can't do that, she must

not look for anything like matrimonial felicity. No real happiness, no real peace, no real comfort, when "cares annoy," are to be found in like perfection as by the side of the household hearth; and therefore I must say a little say upon these matters.

I suppose that every one, if he were to be asked the question, would say that he should like a "happy home." The thing is not so common as many suppose. It is a precious jewel which is not to be picked up on the surface, but must be dug and searched and laboured for with the aid of a good deal of common sense, tact, and resolute perseverance. A happy home is not made all at once any more than a bird's nest is made all at once, and it requires skill and painstaking in the making. The natural tendency of mortal things is to irregularity and confusion, pain, trouble, and sorrow; but when mind is called into play, and prayer calls down a blessing from above, and the Holy Spirit enlightens by its teachings, then the discordant and jarring sounds of our ill-tuned instruments—the affections—come into unison, and human harmony and melody discourse most excellent music.

To those, then, who would desire this heavenly order of things, I would fain enumerate a few of the requisites of a happy home; without many of them, the marriage state would be intolerable and unendurable, and home would be little better than a place of torment, for the evil passions are worse than imps of that place which is bottomless. And the thoughtless stupidity which is so very common, with regard to household felicity and the way to secure it, is the very quintessence of donkeyism, bottled up ready for mischievous kicking and tribulation.

Order is heaven's first law. It is the order of nature, the order of the universe, everything being arranged on

a plan and principle, and kept in harmony by the operation of certain invariable laws. Order in a house is equally necessary if human comfort and happiness be the object, and disorderly conduct, whether in the house or out of it, is sure to bring its penalties. The first principle has regard to *place*, the second relates to *time*. "A place for everything, and everything in its place, and a time for everything, and everything in its time." If these two principles be acted on, their observance go a great way towards ensuring household comfort. Order clears away as she goes; she does not let the breakfast things stand about, while she goes up to make the beds, for the want of hot water to wash them up. Order does not come down from the bed-making leaving the bedroom undusted and slops unemptied. Order does not peel the potatoes, and throw the peelings under the fire-grate. Order does not throw the tea-leaves into the sink hole below the pump spout. Order does not thrust dirty dishes into holes and corners, nor stick crusts of bread about on shelves and in cupboards. Order does not permit half-slices of butter to remain on a variety of plates; or for sugar, or tea, or mustard, to remain for days in their opened papers before putting them into their proper receptacles. Order does not throw down the piece of meat fresh from the butcher's into a dish, to become unwholesome, but hangs it on a hook. Order does not throw shawls and bonnets on a chair, or perhaps on the floor, but puts them carefully upon a place fit to receive them. Order has a bag for combs and hair brushes. Order does not cram the clothes for the wash into unimaginable places, but sorts them carefully into the clothes well, taking care that the dirtiest articles are kept by themselves. Order does not sweep the dust and dirt of a passage under the door mat, and is particularly mindful of having nothing hidden up in

dark corners. Order has a particular dislike to uncomfortable drawers, into which every heterogeneous thing is crammed higgledy-piggledy, so as to form a focus of inextricable confusion. Order does not leave the soap in the water after washing. Order keeps the garden in order, and is particularly impartial to weeds and litters; and, among other good things that she does, order takes care that the inmates of the pigstye are not without a post to rub themselves against for their comfort, that their noses are ringed, and that their troughs cannot be upset. In short, order does all things in a sensible, careful, thoughtful, proper manner, and is a great benefactor to the human species, and one of the most amiable promoters of human happiness, and should be obeyed accordingly.

The very opposite to order is *confusion*—a very common personage in the houses of both rich and poor, who is utterly destructive to household comfort, and who, when thoroughly located in a family, is a general “disturber of the peace.” With her everything goes wrong; the cart is everlastingly put before the horse; all is in the wrong place, and nothing in the right time. Mustard pots are without mustard, saltcellars without salt till just at the moment they are wanted. Things are mislaid; nothing is ready; there is a hunt all over the house for things that ought to be at hand. The chimney smokes, and the soot comes down over the roasting joint; sauce-pans boil over, and the cat runs away with some little tit-bit of cookery in preparation on the dresser. All is helter and skelter, and one operation runs into the other in spite of every effort at adjustment; yet the sweeping and the scrubbing, and the scouring, the sweeping and the brushing, the folding and scolding, all go on the same. Everything is behind-hand, and “before-hand” is never thought of; and ferment and muddlefication is

present both in the house, and out of the house, and round the house, from the kitchen to the chambers, including all the staircases and the passages. There are the steps leading to the door littered or spotted; the accumulated dirt left beneath the scraper; the shabby, ill-fitted blinds are all askew; spiders' webs are in the corners of the window-panes; and a dustpan, or perhaps a pail of water, is on the stairs, for you to fall over and break your neck.

All this from want of method. Method is the sister of order, and without her aid no home can be comfortable. There is a right method in everything, from the folding of a table-cloth to the dusting of a drawing-room; and the end of experience is the right method of doing things. Some people, by a kind of instinct, see at once how a thing should be done. Others are slow to learn, but surmount the difficulty by painstaking. Some never learn at all.

No one can be happy or comfortable when a house is in disorder, when chairs are lumbered up, or tables loaded with litters, or carpets strewn with shreds, or crumbs, or the like. To orderly minds such accumulations are a positive torture, and tend to disturb the feelings, so as to produce and provoke ill temper, horrible to endure, and drive the lord of the mansion to the comfortable inn and quiet and cleanly tavern parlour, where everything is neat and nice, and liquor is especially conveniently to hand, and where plated pots glitter in a row, and elegantly polished beer machines, and a coal fire, and a white hearth, and the luxury of a pipe invite him with open arms to that seeming comfort, which exhibits a strong contrast to the misery of his own dwelling. Among other things of discomfort are disorderly children—babes who squall from morning till night from want of good nursing and management, and

boys and girls who climb over the backs of chairs, slide down bannisters, and who practise boisterous noises and every kind of mischievous monkey tricks, of which there is neither prevention or cure. If children are not brought up in orderly and submissive habits, they of themselves would create confusion in all order, and render all about them perfectly bewildered. Nothing can surpass the horrible state of wretchedness that only one unruly disorderly child can produce in a family. Yet mothers, led astray by the instinct of animals for their young, pet and indulge their offspring to such a degree as to make them nuisances to all around them, while they cannot see anything in their conduct but what may be justified on the score of exuberant youthful spirits, and the natural follies belonging to childhood, and so quiet and orderly and forbearing people have to suffer.

So much for order, disorder, and muddle. And now for NICETY, who is also the sister of the former. Nicety likes to see clean steps to a door, and clean skirting boards in the kitchen. She is fond of bright utensils, sweet and wholesome cupboards, a nicely laid cloth, and neat set-out of the breakfast, dinner, or tea table. She is particularly fond also of clean hands and faces, of a neat white apron, and of a good strong large one when work is going on. She is an enemy to tawdry ribbons and artificial flowers, but a friend to well-laced boots, with the tongues not flapping about the heels, and of small white collar, well-brushed hair, and becoming-looking caps, and is particularly fond of a well-brushed polished stove, fender, and fireirons, and of a clean hearth. She rejoices in well-cleaned windows, and has no objection to a few geraniums and myrtles in pots, or a nosegay of flowers in a vase or bottle. She enjoys well-rubbed and shining furniture, and saucepans and stewpans clean and bright both within and without, and

with a tea-kettle not ashamed to show its face on the hob. Well-scrubbed dressers, and plate racks free from dirt and grease, and sinks, over which plates and dishes are washed, free from disagreeable accumulations. She feels great delight in the open and cheerful face of the backyard, and in the sanitary condition of the inside of the water-butt, the dust-bin, and of all things thereunto adjacent and appertaining, and has an especial horror of foul smells, particularly of cabbage water, and of the various fever-breeding effluvia or disagreeable masses of every kind. She is fond of ablutions, and thinks that washing of the feet is as necessary as washing the hands; and "clean" teeth are as beautiful in her estimation as the pearls in a monarch's crown. And so she walks about a house in the loveliness of her excellence, to order it, and keep it, and garnish it, so as to make it a place of delicious comfort and joyful entertainment to all who pass her threshold, and especially to the lord of the mansion, whether he be rich or poor, gentle or simple, father, or brother, or husband; and she feels as much pride and glory in her little domain as the queen herself feels in the empire upon which the sun is said never to set.

Every one must have noticed the advantage of a cheerful dwelling, of a house with a lovely prospect, with windows open to the light of the morning, and where, from a blooming apple or plum tree, the song of birds is heard at the beginning or ending of the day. But it is not always that habitations have these delicious privileges. Many a working man's house has a dead wall in front and a dead wall behind, and is so closed up on every side that sunlight is almost excluded, and every bright and cheerful thing forbidden to peep in. But blessed be God, who can give light in the deepest of darkness, and create a glory in the profoundest gloom,

there is no place so dim or drear but a cheerful heart and a cheerful face will not illuminate. Cheerfulness is the internal sunshine of a dwelling, and a happy face—a face beaming with the loveliness of an amiable temper, dissipates most of the inevitable evils of life, and they flee away like fogs and mists before a summer's sun. Cheerfulness is one of the tokens which a child of God bears from the Father of light, and, sanctified in His sight, it purifies the whole moral atmosphere about us, scares away the noxious reptiles of the mind, and sweeps down the cobwebs that muffle up our best thoughts and feelings.

Yes, it is indeed one of the first of home comforts when a happy face meets us on the threshold as we return from toil, for toil is then remembered no more, except as one of the blessings which enable us to provide for those we love. There is always a powerful stimulus in a sweet look of genuine affection; and as an illustration of this in the life of Hutton—"My wife," said he, "has not only always something nice and economical for my supper, but the sauce (not of the tongue) of a cheerful, merry face to season it. How often have I come home, wearied in body, perplexed in mind, and disgusted with the ingratitude and base selfishness of man, overborne perhaps by pride, crushed by the weight of overwhelming gold, bent and bowed down by chagrin and disappointment, when my wife's smile on the threshold, her cheerful, happy looks, and the cheerful look of all about her, down to the very cat that rubbed itself against my legs as I entered my dwelling, has sent flying away, like so many imps of darkness, the sad thoughts that beset me, calmed my feelings, assuaged my evil thoughts, and restored me to that serenity of mind and goodwill towards others, which are so essential to great enterprises and carrying them out successfully."

Another home comfort is a "gentle voice." Happy is the man that has to listen to the music of it. A man's voice may be strong and sonorous, but a woman's must be soft, and low, and sweet, and delicate. Few are aware of the harmony produced by a meek and gentle voice over the whole habitation. The voice is the keynote, as it were, to the grand oratorio of the day's bustle; if wrongly pitched, we have a hurly-burly confusion of continuous discords. Cruel truths,* necessary to be said, have no barbed prongs when spoken in gentle language, although they pierce deeper and probe the more fully. But a barbarous disturber of domestic peace is the shrill, loud, screaming discord of the female larynx, or its chattering, nagging grumble. To be stung with wasps, or bitten into bumps by mosquitoes, or tormented by the puny acrobats of the bed-chamber, is by no means so unendurable as to be perpetually under the infliction of a fierce scorpion tongue. Pinkerton, who was a sergeant of dragoons during the American war, gives an account of the effect of a woman's voice on an old horse of his named "Turk." He was a huge black horse, a fine, noble, sure-footed, but stubborn old fellow. Every morning they used to muster for parade on the barrack ground opposite the men's mess rooms. The old horse was especially fond of music, and when the band struck up he was all joy and animation, pricking up his ears, and slashing with his tail, as if in a kind of extasy. He was no less alive to the sounds which proceeded from the throat of Pinkerton's wife. The stable in which he was kept being at the rear of Pinkerton's hut, the old horse could hear the wife's voice from day to day in all its combinations of shrill fierceness and furious clamour, and found by a kind of instinct that, whenever he had heard these sounds, and the sergeant came to groom him, he was sure to come

in for an extra punch or whack or two. One morning the troop was drawn up in the barrack square, and it so happened that old Turk was placed close to the front door of Pinkerton's hut. All was quiet enough for awhile, but just as the troop was about to face round, the shrill voice of Mrs. Pinkerton was heard at the top of its pitch scolding the "baker." Up rises old Turk on his hind legs, down then on fore ones, up go his heels behind, off goes Pinkerton, while the whole troop, supposing perhaps that the shrill pipes they heard were intended for a trumpet sounding a charge, dashed forward in the most ridiculous confusion, and to the great dismay of both officers and men, and to the production of a tale to last for many a long day, illustrative of the dangerous effect of a discordant voice. Some people are great admirers of the music of a piano-forte, and love to hear its dulcet sounds by night or day jingling in their ears, and the money and time spent upon the learning of the instrument is enormous; but the finest sound to be heard in a household is the sweet and gentle voice, of which I have spoken, heard in accents of love and affection, to husband, or child, or friend, or neighbour. And next to it is the crow and chuckle of some healthy, happy baby, when it gives a jerk and a leap of extasy in its mother's arms. There beat the finest music of the finest of all composers, from Handel to Jullien, and afford more melodious symphonies than ever Haydn set to score. Talk about going to music halls and concerts, oratorios or operas, where sopranos and prima donnas sing Italian dialogues; these are nothing to me compared to the singing of the tea-kettle on the hob, or of the cricket on the hearth, when at the closing of the day the man of toil sits down with his wife and family to their "tea-supper," in the midst of domestic endearments of various kinds, well set forth by the "quaker poet:—"

“There blend the ties that strengthen
Our hearts in hours of grief,
The silver links that lengthen
Joy's visits when most brief.
There eyes in all their splendour
Are vocal to the heart,
And glances gay or tender
Fresh eloquence impart.
Pleasure is marked by fleetness
To those who idly roam,
While grief itself hath sweetness
Within the household home.”

An *amiable disposition*, too, is an excellent piece of family furniture. Down sofas and splendid looking-glasses do not produce so much comfort to the mind as the inward feeling of kindness and amiability. It is not only a sweetness in itself, but it imparts its sweetness to all around, like some fragrant flower, and fills the house with a kind of moral incense. To be amiable is to be happy; to be kindly and affectionately disposed towards those who surround us, to make allowances for human error and the accidents of heedlessness or frailty, to sympathise with the unfortunate, and to comfort the afflicted, is to partake largely of earthly as of heavenly bliss. And homes are the happiest where an amiable disposition is the chief dispenser of our daily dishes, culinary or sociable. Amiability need not be lackadaisical, or stupidly sentimental, or mawkish, or moodish, for true amiability is a thing of sound reason and common sense, guided and directed by human sympathy, which cannot be better described than in the words of the apostle in regard to charity, which is christian amiability on the most comprehensive scale, which “believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.” I do not believe that a truly amiable disposition can exist except in connection with the christian virtues;

and she is the most amiable who has the spirit of Christ in her heart, for that spirit is a spirit of love, joy, meekness, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness. Where this amiability exists as the presiding queen of domestic duty, there indeed will be happiness, which it will be difficult for the bitterest cares of the world to destroy.

GOOD TEMPER, too, is another ingredient in domestic bliss. Smiles, and a cheerful face, and even a gentle voice, can be put on for the occasion ; but a good temper is part and parcel both of man and woman. A good temper goes over difficulties as a well-built and lively bark goes over the ruffles of the mighty deep, riding and capering upon them as it were, and rollicking in the foam of the waves. When good temper is the result of a clear conscience and a right spring of duty dwelling in the heart, the difficulties of life are easily surmounted ; and happy are those who bring it as their marriage inheritance ; but woe to those who are troubled with the sulks. A sulky man is bad enough, but a sulky woman is ten times worse. Sulkiness arises from capricious displeasure in an unreasonable, dogged, stupid person ; who thinks to work his revenge upon those who have given offence by silence. Heaven forbid that the sulks should ever establish itself in any household hearth, for where she is, there it is that the robin sings in vain, and the cricket sings in vain, and the sunshine looks in vain into the windows, and flowers blossom in vain round the lintels. Of the two, a scolding woman is more endurable than a sulky woman ; and even querulousness and pertinacity, which are always finding fault, or complaining and creating misery around, are not so bad as sulkiness, as these passions work themselves off, and are amusing, if it were right to be amused by them ; and those who are so unhappy as to be under their tyranny, when once relieved, open their bosoms for kindness to take refuge

there again: but sulkiness is never open to conviction, for as I said, it is generally founded upon stupidity, and a cold-blooded temperament, and phlegmatic disposition. The remedy for it is to let it take its full swing. But no home can ever be happy in which this most disagreeable passion of the mind takes up its abode, and to be married to it is little short of madness.

An "*affectionate demeanour*" is also a nice thing to have in a house. I remember once seeing at the door of a small genteelish-looking cottage a pair of turtle doves, and when I entered it I saw several birds in cages singing sweetly. "Ah," thought I, "this is the place for happiness." But I was mistaken; for although the inmates were really sentimentally fond of each other, and liked to see doves in a cage billing and cooing, the two persons I refer to never seemed to behave to each other as if they were one flesh—not a bit of it. There was no affectionate demeanour whatever, no nice little attentions on either side, no little forbearances, no respect to each other's feelings, so there was a pretty little tinkling discord in the house. There was, too, a vast apparent indifference, and a chilly coldness, not the result of mutual dislike, but of stupidity. Wise and sensible people always observe an affectionate demeanour towards each other, never forgetting the respect which man owes to woman and woman to man; and this kind of conduct has a vast deal to do with happy homes. And little kindnesses too, how powerful are they in the production of happiness! Life is made up of atoms, time of seconds, and little matters are often productive of the greatest events, both for good or evil. Every hour in the day calls upon us for little acts of love or justice, little amenities and civilities, and these sweeten the often bitter cup of life so as to make it endurable. A man, for instance, comes home weary and low-spirited;

and when he enters his dwelling, one of his little children runs and sets him a chair, another brings his slippers; and then his wife has secured some little nicety for his evening repast, which is presently set before him. And so family affection, in a thousand winning ways, has a mighty charm to dispel the pressure of indigence and to beautify the home of industry.

One of the prettiest sights I ever saw in my life was upon my once looking into the cottage of a working man at the close of the day. The night was setting in gloomily, for it was the middle of November. I wanted a job done to my gig, and walked down from the clergyman's to the wheelwright's. I knocked at the door, and heard a cheerful, independent kind of voice cry, "Come in." So I opened the door. There sat the wheelwright in his snug chimney corner, with a good wood fire blazing before him, smoking his pipe, and nursing a fine fat baby; his wife was sitting at a table close by, busily plying her needle; his eldest daughter, a girl of about eleven, was knitting little socks for the baby; the eldest boy, about nine, was cutting wooden pegs to be used in the wheelwrighty; while a younger girl was working a sampler, and a younger boy about five was busily employed in colouring some small outline prints. Here was a happy family; here was ingenuity and industry, comfort and quiet, ease and enjoyment. How different to the enjoyment of the public-house, the skittle ground, or the quiet game of cards in the little back parlour of the inn. How different too to the squalling and bawling of an ill-trained family, and the litter and confusion of a badly-managed house, where all is in a muddle.

At first sight it may appear a very easy thing to attain this household felicity, and that it only requires a will to ensure it in all its perfection. But there is no place so pure and holy, but evil will endeavour to make a

lodgment in it. Our first parents had a sad experience of this fact; they lived in a paradise prepared by their good and great Creator, and might have enjoyed themselves for ever. Here they had all that human wishes could desire, provision for the full and perfect exercise of the senses and of the intellect, and for the development of the higher faculties of the soul. All around was peace, and joy, and harmony, and beauty; yet Satan soon put his foot there, to poison, and destroy, and to throw into ruin all the blessings of that heavenly existence, and to drive its inmates into sin, misery, and sorrow. And so it may be, unless constant watchfulness be exercised, with those who have made for themselves that earthly paradise, a "happy home," unless the Spirit of God walks in it to purify the sanctuary from all that is unholy. Satan is as busy now as he was when he first entered the garden of Eden, as full of bitter hatred and cruel malice, subtle craft, hatred and deceit, all ready to be exercised for the ruin of man's happiness both in this world and that which is to come. The wicked, unrestrained passions of the mind are his ministers in this execrable work, and they, like him, go about seeking whom they may devour.

Envy is one of these fiends of mischief, and the mind that entertains it can never enjoy happiness. It is a possession that acts on the soul as rust acts upon iron, corroding it and eating it away by piecemeal, destroying the day's joy and the night's repose, and invading the midnight dreams; and numerous are the progeny of the old hag; Hatred and Malice are her twin firstborn, and after these come Spite and Slander, Detraction, and a host of minor imps, who harass the mind with perpetual chagrin, and soon drive peace and comfort over the threshold. Keep Envy and her crew, then, away from the household hearth; look upon her, if she comes near

the door, as some foul witch, who brings curses under her garment to destroy contentment—that angel of our homes, who makes the dry crust a savoury morsel, and a cup of spring water more delicious than the finest wine, and a chaff mattress softer than the finest down.

Intemperance, too, is another foul fiend, whose aim it is to destroy body and soul, to make matrimony a curse, and deprive children of bread; who brings confusion, and strife, and woe, and discord, and misery, and sin of every deadly form and type into the dwellings both of rich and poor. It is Satan incarnate, going about like a roaring lion, and devouring millions upon millions of every degree, from the highest to the lowest, or rolling over them his car of tyranny, like that of Juggernaut, and crushing every sentiment of good within his prostrate victims. If we look at the columns of every daily print we shall see how often lust, and murder, and other enormous crimes have their origin in this wretched vice, and how infamy is multiplied, from door to door, by indulgence in its fearful orgies. If you would have your home a happy one, let not the spirit bottle ever enter your dwelling; avoid intoxicating drinks of every kind; shun them as you would the plague, the pestilence, or the malaria, for none of these, nor even the sword, commit such cruel devastation, or so thoroughly destroy all that is dear and valuable to mankind.

I might mention the danger to be apprehended from many other evil passions or habits likely to invade domestic comfort, for their name is legion, but shall content myself by remarking upon one which is no uncommon visitor—and this is Jealousy; and of all the fiends engendered in the human heart, she is one of the most fearful, for she turns love into hatred, and changes the most honied instincts of life into a corroding poison. Whenever Jealousy takes up her lodging in a

house, farewell for ever to domestic enjoyment, to sweet sleep, to fond regards, to tender endearments of thought and act, and to every holy feeling; farewell to the bright eye and cheerful countenance, to the sweet smile of welcome and the parting kiss of love; farewell to the noble sentiment of duty, to self-sacrifice, and to the exquisite pleasure of devoted and ardent attachment. Home, no longer a heaven of chaste delights, is turned into a pandemonium of misgivings and of torture unendurable. Open not the door to jealousy by levity of conduct or unchaste desires; if she once enters, it is a difficult thing to eject her, for she will hold possession in spite of all reason, and home will be miserable for ever.

Jealousy is indeed one of the great destroyers of domestic peace, and is often produced by some intimate acquaintance. Sally had none of these; but a near neighbour of hers—one Patty Groom—had. Patty was a little too fond of listening to the counsel of this acquaintance, and you will see what came of it. This particular friend was one Mrs. Gordon, an old flame of Patty's husband before he married. They were, as was often said, "like sisters:" Mrs. Gordon was in and out half the day at Mrs. Groom's, ready to do anything for her, and professing the greatest affection. But alas! she was like that old fiend whom I have mentioned, and Milton has described as sitting like a cormorant on one of the trees of the garden of Eden—full of envy and spite against the happiness he saw around him, and was determined to destroy it. Mrs. Gordon hated both man and wife, and after a time began to insinuate various matters against Groom, without the slightest foundation. Patty, who was doatingly fond of Groom, instead of turning a deaf ear to the insinuation, turned the quick ear of jealousy to every whisper of this wicked and cruel woman; and from that moment all her household happi-

ness was fled. Every day brought some false things to her mind; "trifles, light as air," were to her "confirmation strong as proof of Holy Writ;" her heaven was turned to hell, her love to hate, her peace of soul to anguish; and the cause of all her misery came daily, under the pretence of comforting her, to open her wounds afresh, and scarify them again. The end of all this was, that poor Patty Groom lost her reason, and ended her life in a lunatic asylum, and Richard Groom never looked up again. Therefore, my readers, beware of jealousy; it is a "green-eyed monster, that doth make the meat it feeds on;" and beware also of "particular friends."

But how shall we repel this and other destroyers of happiness? Evil is a powerful principle; it circumvents us on all sides, is above and beneath us, and in our very heart-centre, to undermine the springs of life and to root up our highest aspirations. We may keep out the personal enemies of our comfort by barring and locking the doors of our house, and we may, by prudence and forethought, arrest many of the disasters of life; but our spiritual enemy, and our proneness to sin, require a higher and a stronger Power to buffet them and drive them away whenever they may choose to assault us. In earthly warfare we have our impregnable bastions, our plated vessels, our "rifles" and "Armstrongs," for our defence. Thank God, that in our spiritual warfare, and in our contests with the enemy of man, we are still mightier, and that, far beyond the efficiency of armies or armaments, is the potent *power of prayer* with *Christ the rock of our defence*; and of all the spectacles that can be presented to the mortal eye in this foundering world is the spectacle of a christian family making the "household hearth" its altar of morning and evening sacrifice. To see bending before the footstool of the eternal Father the husband, the wife, the children young and old, the

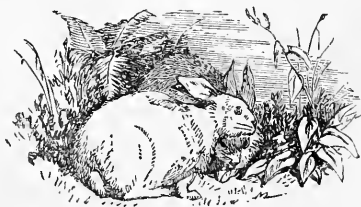
domestics, and perhaps the stranger, supplicating for grace, and for strength, and for protection against the evils and temptations that may assail us in our daily walk, is a sight which angels, dwelling in the glory of God, may look upon with a delight akin to that they enjoy in the heavenly world. If we would have, therefore, love, and peace, and joy in our dwellings, we must seek to secure these blessings through our frequent communication with the eternal Father in the faith of His Son, the Saviour of our souls. Then it is that fiends are sent away from us howling and gnashing their teeth, and that angels come and minister to us.

When the "household hearth" becomes a "household altar," home is a consecrated spot and a temple of the living God, in which deeds of affection, of duty, of self-sacrifice, and goodness are the meet and acceptable offerings. The worship of our Heavenly Father, in buildings set apart for prayer and the oblations of the Sabbath, are in the highest degree important to us, and he who neglects them can hope for no earthly blessings; but, however impressive and important they may be, whether in the cathedral or tabernacle, still they are not to supersede the spontaneous and devout aspirations of the heart, which arise in prayer or praise from a pious family, knit together in love, and kneeling before the footstool of the Most High.

And in all these household delights and duties we should not forget that our true home is not here, and that far beyond the regions of time and space lies our eternal—our heavenly home, that Eden again restored, that paradise of never-ending joy, into which evil cannot enter, and which has been prepared for all true believers from the foundation of the world. To that home all our thoughts should tend, for it is there that redemption is

made perfect, and man restored to the divine likeness through Him who died for us.

And let our home here upon earth resemble, as much as possible, our home in heaven, by its peace, its purity, and its love, and by the practice of fireside virtues and domestic duty. Let it resemble it in its happy cheerfulness, in its songs of devout joy, and in its praises and thanksgivings; in its absence of turmoil and strife, and in freedom from evil passions and presumptuous sin; so that in our household felicity we may enjoy a foretaste of the bliss that awaits us. With our hearts full of love for eternal mansions, we will not sigh after the melancholy wickedness of earth, nor be captivated by the sight of "the men in chains," but, with eyes fixed upon heavenly mansions, run the race that is set before us, with patience, and courage, and constancy, and hope, nothing doubting in the goodness and mercy of our heavenly Father to guide our footsteps, and to strengthen and sustain us in every domestic trial, and to cheer and assist us in every household duty, and secure for us **HOUSEHOLD HAPPINESS.**



SUNDAY EXCURSIONS.

IT was a bright Saturday afternoon in mid-summer. The hot sunbeams gleamed through the dingy windows of a large London manufactory, where many men were busily engaged in work. The click and whirr of machinery in an adjoining room sounded unceasingly. There it would have been impossible for the workers to keep up a conversation so as to make each other heard; but in the large room of which I have spoken, the noise was not too great to prevent chattering, in which many of the men were indulging.

“Well, this *is* a baking day!” said one, facetiously, to his neighbour, as he drew his bare arm across his heated and grimy face. “If anything ’ud make a fellow pant for a sea-breeze, *this* would: I feel just stewed. I guess I shall get the dust blowed out of me down at Brighton to-morrow.”

“Why!” said John Watt, his friend, “I thought you didn’t patronise Sunday excursions, Harry.”

“Well, no, I don’t in a general way; but I thought I’d give the missis and the young-uns a bit of a treat for once in a way. You see, John,

we can keep the Sunday just as well there as here, because we shall go to a place of worship—the train starts early, and gets there in time; then in the afternoon we shall stroll about and enjoy ourselves, and get home in the evening as comfortable and refreshed as possible.”

“And how about the engine-driver, the porters, and guards? Don’t you think they would like a day of rest as well as we?” said Watt.

“Dare say they would,” replied Harry Lyte, as he went on energetically with his work, “and I daresay they get it sometimes. We needn’t suppose that the same men drive the excursions every Sunday, or that the very same porters are in attendance at the stations.”

“That’s no matter,” said Watt, “*some* men are there to attend on the pleasure-seekers; and I say it’s a shame, one man has as much right to a rest on the Sabbath as another.”

“Well, if *we* didn’t go by the excursions, some one else would; so our denying ourselves an innocent pleasure wouldn’t prevent the trains running,” said Lyte. “And even if excursions didn’t run at all on Sundays, the railway people wouldn’t get their rest because of the ordinary trains that run for ordinary people, who don’t consider themselves such sinners as we poor excursionists.”

“They are just as much to blame,” said Watt. “And I tell you what it is, I consider it selfish in the highest degree, for one class of persons to say

to another, ‘You must forego the boon of a day of rest, and the privilege of attending a place of worship, that we may enjoy ourselves on the Sunday.’ It is a kind of despotism. It is one class of men making another class slaves on that day when *all* men should be free to rest, and refresh their souls and bodies, so as to enable them to be ‘diligent in business’ during the six days on which God has commanded them to work.”

“Well, now,” said Lyte, “it happens that railway people are not the only ones who are deprived of their Sunday for the gratification of other folks. There are bakers and brewers at work on Sundays, fishmongers, and cabmen, and ’busmen. Why, the lady that my wife lived with before we were married, although she pretended to be very religious, she never would have her Sunday fish sent home on the Saturday; nor would she have stayed from church on the Sunday, if it had rained hatchets even; but then the old fogey never *walked* to church—catch her at it. Poor cabby had to drive her there in all weathers, and wait at the church doors till her ladyship came out. Of course, she didn’t think cabby had a soul, and as for wanting rest for his body, ‘how could he think of that when he had his living to get?’” My wife was let out in the evening after working the whole day Sunday—and that’s how folks live. Rich folks ought to make Sunday as easy as ever they can for their servants, I say. They may count us worse than

heathen for going excursions on a Sunday, but I do stick to this, if they help to rob any tradesman of his Sunday, or keep their servants slaving at things that ain't necessary, they are every bit as bad as we are."

"Then you do not mean what you said just now when you used the words 'innocent pleasure?'" said Watt. "Indeed, Harry, it is not innocent, because God has said, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.'"

"O, as for that," replied Lyte, "that doesn't hold good now. That was a commandment given to the Jews hundreds of years ago. We live under the Christian dispensation, and you know the New Testament says that we are not to be judged in respect of a holy-day, and that if we choose to esteem every day alike no one is to judge us, or something of the sort, I don't exactly remember what."

"The second commandment was one of *ten*," replied Watt, "and if 'Thou shalt not steal,' and 'Thou shalt do no murder,' hold good in the present day, so also does 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' We sin against that God who is so good to us, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being, when we refuse to keep holy the day which He has blessed. And look here, Harry, even if it were *not* for our highest good to keep the Sabbath holy, we should do it if it is commanded by God, out of pure gratitude to

Him, because He is so good to us. See how He gives us health and strength for our daily labour, and loads us with blessings too common to be noticed, although we don't deserve anything good at his hands; again, we should keep holy the Sabbath day for our own sakes, even if God had *not* commanded us to do so, because, look here, our bodies require periodical rest, and our minds require to be elevated by high and pure thoughts, or we should soon descend to the level of the unthinking soul-less brutes. Now, about bodily rest, I affirm that we don't get it in Sunday pleasuring, going excursions, and so forth; that is just hard work, one comes home more tired on a Sunday night from a day's gallivant, than one does on a Saturday night from a hard week's work. And then on the Monday morning one crawls to work achy, shaky, and dissatisfied with everything and everybody. I've proved it, because I've been out pleasuring on Sundays many a time in my life."

Watt picked up a tool which he had dropped, and went on: "If our bodies require a rest and refreshing, how much more our souls? Why, I tell you what it is, Harry, sometimes when I think that we men have got immortal souls, and that we shall live on somewhere for ever, and *ever*, and *ever*, and NEVER die; the thought seems to me grand and awful!"

"There, I never think of it much," said Lyte.

“I try to forget it; it makes me feel all over anyhow.”

“It is folly and cowardice to try to forget it,” said Watt, earnestly. “It is a *great fact*, and we should stand up and face it like men. I never thought much this way till my wife died a year or two ago; she was one of the religious sort—not like that person that your wife used to live with, mind you. I know now that she was in the right, though I used to give it her well about her religion. I called it all cant, but there was no cant about *her*, poor soul.”

Watt dashed his hand across his eyes and continued, “One thing that I stood out against her most about was the very thing we are discussing—Sunday excursions; but though she never said a cross word about them, but only kept on in a pleading kind of way, I never would give in. I remember how I thundered at her one day for quoting this text to me, ‘If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’ I told her that it was like Dutch to me, and

she was to keep her cant to herself. So I went my own way, though my mind was dreadfully uneasy, and she went her way, to her little chapel as usual. I nicknamed her 'Methodist,' because she never would come with me on Sundays."

"Well, to be sure!" said Lyte, "now my Jane's just the reverse; she's up in the boughs about going to Brighton to-morrow."

"Well, my missis died, continued Watt, "and one night as I stood by the bed where she was laid out all white and cold, I began to think all sorts of things about the soul. And, bless you, everything seemed so *real*; life and death, and the hereafter seemed to me such *tremendous facts*, that I wondered at myself for ever having considered any such thing as pleasure or worldly gain, or selfish gratification before eternal things. I thought of that text in *her* bible which says, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And though I tried hard to forget these things, they clung to me; and thoughts came into my mind which *I couldn't* drive out anyhow."

Harry Lyte looked very uneasy, and scratched his head. Going on busily with his work, Watt continued, "Well, I resolved to let the Sunday excursions alone for a bit, and I went to church and tried to learn something that had made my wife so good, for she *was* good, now I come to think of it, little less than an angel."

“Stop a minute,” said Harry, interrupting; “before you go on, I want to say a word about church-going. Now, you know, I’ve fought shy of Sunday excursions—that is, by rail—up to this time; to-morrow we are going to make our first. I have been in the habit of going to church in the morning, out with the missis and the children to Hampton Court, or to some pleasure-gardens in the afternoon and evening. Of course, we patronised ’busses, there were men and horses working just like on other days, but higher folks do just the same thing in their way, so it don’t matter.”

“But do you think,” chimed in Watt, “that the fact of one class of persons doing what we consider wrong, is any excuse for our doing the same?”

“Well, I suppose not,” replied Lyte. “I’m not saying now whether it is right or wrong; I only say that is what we have been in the habit of doing. And you do that yourself, don’t you, Watt? If you don’t, you used to.”

“Yes, I used to, but I’ve given it up entirely now. The last Sunday jaunt I took was to Kew Gardens last summer. A little Frenchman came to lodge next door to me, a silk-weaver by trade. He hadn’t been in England long, and didn’t know much of London, so I took him to Kew Gardens. You know I do like the sight of flowers and green trees, and it seemed to do one’s heart good to see the beauty of the place. But the going there and back again was dreadful.

The crowds of giddy people, smoking, swearing, and many of them tipsy, were sad to see. The dusty, jaded-looking 'bus-men, and the tired, reeking horses—I tell you what, I felt as though I alone was answerable for robbing them of their seventh of rest. The little Frenchman was as pleased as Punch. He rubbed his hands, and pummelled me about to make me look first at this and then at that, and he said, ‘Varry like Paris!’ and then he explained as well as he could, for he didn’t know much English, that it didn’t need much more to give us the *blessings* such as can be enjoyed in Paris on a Sunday, and he explained to me what some of them were. I said to myself, ‘God forbid that we should ever descend to that!’ But I tell you I felt sorry to my heart for the poor folks. I know they work hard all the week, and we know what that is, and they seem to want a turn-out now and then to see flowers, and grass, and to get a mouthful of fresh air. We all feel so; it is natural we should, and we ought to get it. But things ought to be so arranged that we could get it on week-days. Some do, but we don’t; but if we were to stir ourselves a bit I dare say we should get an opportunity for getting out sometimes to enjoy ourselves without desecrating the Sabbath. Now in summer evenings I do get many a jolly stroll, and it’s downright good. In the evenings of last winter I studied at home, and though I couldn’t do much

by myself at first, for I haven't had much education in my time, still I managed to get on bit by bit; and bless you! you wouldn't believe what a pleasure learning is; talk about the pleasure of sitting boozing of nights in public houses, or wandering from gin-palace to gin-palace for a spree—bah! it makes a fellow feel more like a beast than a man."

"Well," said Lyte, "and pray what do you do with *yourself* on a Sunday?"

"Well, before service in the morning I go for a walk if the weather's fit; then after service home to dinner; then take a book, and perhaps out to one of the parks; in the evening to church or chapel again. And on Monday morning I feel like a lark. I've had a rest for my body, and I've had food for my soul; I feel that I have learnt something, climbed another round of the 'ladder of learning,' as you may say, and then there is something inside that tells me I have done right, and I feel as I should *not* feel if I had been patronising Sunday excursions. But you see, Harry, in some respects I'm different from you, because I've neither chick nor child and no wife, so that I am free to spend Sunday as I please. But I don't think it would be any trouble to take two or three children with me wherever I went."

"Bless you, no," said Lyte. "I always take the children with me on Sundays, though I'm sure they don't need the fresh air so much as I

do, for they go to school on week days and get plenty of play. I don't get out on Sunday mornings before service, for if I didn't peep into a newspaper then I never should at all."

"You should carry your paper in your pocket to peep into in the dinner hour," said Watt. "I have no need to take up my Sunday time with newspapers, yet I think I could pretty well tell you what is going on all over the world. I know how affairs are going on in America; I know where Garibaldi is, and what he is doing; all about our dear little queen, the prince of Wales, and all of them; what is doing in Parliament, and all the rest of it."

"Well, I suppose it's possible to get something out of odds and ends of time, but it's what I've never troubled myself to do. But you see," continued Lyte, laughing, "we have got half-a-mile away from what we were talking about. I was going to say that sometimes I go to church or chapel, and stand for half-an-hour perhaps before I get into a seat, though there may be plenty empty, but they're 'owned.' Well, I don't like that sort of thing; I can't afford to pay for sittings, and I do say that churches and chapels ought to be built so that seats are as free for one as another. There isn't half enough accommodation for folks that can't afford to pay for seats. Of course I like to go where the preacher is a man that I can understand and that has a

bit of life in him. I hate drowsy preaching—all about doctrines, and things that don't do any one any good; I like to go where the preacher seems to feel as we feel, and tells us of things that *concern* us and that we can understand, and tells us in *words* that we can understand, not *dictionary* men, you know. Well, it so happens that other folks seem to like the very same thing, and so the places where such men preach are sure to be crowded. Now if all churches and chapels had such men, some of them wouldn't be half empty on Sundays as they are now; and many folks would have something else to care about and think about besides excursion trains. I tell you what it is, John, though I don't pretend to be good—I know I ain't good—yet when I see men preaching in the parks or in the streets on Sundays, I don't make fun of them, because I think they are in earnest about us poor sinners, and with all their hearts they seem to be trying to give us what we can't get inside some decent churches."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the ringing of the six o'clock bell.

"Well," said Watt, smiling, "shall you go to-morrow?"

"O ah," said Lyte, in the tone of one who is making up his mind to do something which he is not quite "clear" about doing, "I think I shall. Why you wouldn't believe I've never seen the sea,

and of course I should like to ; I know the sight of anything grand is elevating.”

So it is, and far be it from any of us to wish to debar our sturdy, industrious working men from the sight of anything grand in nature or art. But we do say that, to gratify that strong desire which is inherent in us all, the working man should not be compelled to give up the Sabbath, to forego its high and holy pleasures and privileges. An extra hour in the evening of each day, and the half of every Saturday for recreation would be a great boon. Then without hurting his conscience he would be able to gaze upon and enjoy the beautiful ; and instead of “ Sunday excursions ” we might have “ Saturday excursions,” —is there any reason why we should not ?

Certainly the labours of philanthropists would increase. In proportion to the time at the disposal of the industrial classes this must be the case. “ Weather permitting ” is a phrase that rises to the lips of us English whenever we are discussing an excursion, a picnic, or a pleasure party. And the weather proving unfavourable on a holiday the time of the working man hangs heavily on his hands if he have not some other means of enjoying himself. The low, brutalizing pleasures—if pleasures we dare call them—of the public house and gin shop cannot satisfy the great cravings of his better nature ; he requires something high, exalting, ennobling. Free lectures

on literature, science, art, or any topic of general interest would be a boon. Saturday concerts of *really good music*, not coarse buffoonery and racy songs, but *real* music, would be appreciated. Saturday and evening classes for self-improvement are wanted; certainly there are many organized already, but more are wanted. This work devolves upon practical philanthropists, and indeed upon working men themselves. They can do more for themselves than anyone can do for them.

The Saturday half-holiday would afford hundreds of hard-worked Londoners an opportunity of visiting the fairy-like palace at Sydenham, or of running down to the sea-shore, to gaze with admiration and delight upon that great deep upon which our bonnie island is cradled. Most Englishmen have a passion for the sea, and it is not to be wondered at that many thoughtlessly avail themselves of the Sunday excursion to wander for a time within sight and sound of its grand murmuring waves. But it is a pity, yea a shame, to see in this christian land the Sabbath made a day of great business, of bustle, and rush, and mad mirth for one portion of the community, and of hard, tiring work for another, which as truly needs a rest-day as any class in the country. Give our working men the Saturday half-holiday, let excursion trains be run for their especial benefit, and they will not be reluctant to give up that Sunday pleasuring in which they now in-

dulge at the expense of the comfort and enjoyment of some of their working brothers. The working people of these realms are men and women of *feeling*, and they can see the justice and reasonableness of demanding for all men one day in seven for rest—for the cabman as well as for the workman in the manufactory; for the engine-driver as well as for the shopman; for the railway porters and guards as well as for the men pent up in close work-rooms.

But there is a shout raised, that if the Sunday excursion trains be stopped our working men will flee for comfort and consolation to the publican. This we believe to be untrue. We believe that the majority of our working men have too much self-respect to think of doing such a thing. Our working people would not bear such a character for drunkenness as they do, were it not that temptations are so forced upon them on every hand that it is next to impossible to expect them to withstand them. No; we have more faith in our working men, in their sense of right, than to think that they would snub like whipped children and run off to the interested publican, and whine in his sympathizing ear, "They won't run Sunday excursions for us, so we *won't* be good, we *won't* go to church, we'll be as bad as ever we can, and so we're come to you to get downright tipsy!" Wouldn't that be like cutting off their nose to spite their face?

Well now, some people have said our working men would do that; but we don't believe a word of it. Give our hard-working people time from weekly labour for recreation, and we will guarantee that their common sense, their feelings, and their self-respect will prompt them to act like *men* on the Sabbath, and not like beasts. It is a libel upon them to say that their "Sunday behaviour" depends upon giving them that which is not for their real and ultimate good.

And above all, let the ministers of our churches and chapels do everything to render the Sunday religious services as alluring as possible. Let one part of the sweet day of rest be exclusively devoted to the working folks. Let the preachers descend from their theological stilts to the level of *men*. Let the sermon be no dry disquisition on abstruse subjects, no doctrinal harangue, but words coming from the heart and going to the heart, uttered, not with a *pulpit*, sanctimonious twang, but in a free, heart-felt, natural manner, about the common wants of this human nature of ours, about the unchangeable love of Him who was wounded for our transgressions, who died that we might live, who invites the weary and heavy laden to come to Him for rest—that is what we all sorely need; about the undying love of Jesus, who, though now far above all things, is interested in all that concerns us, and is touched with the feeling of

our infirmities, because He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let Jesus be fully and simply preached in our churches and chapels, and "the people" will be found turning towards them, as surely as the sunflower turns to the sun; for He alone can satisfy all the cravings of our hearts. And the man who does not so preach Christ and Him crucified, ought not to stand in the pulpit, even though a thousand bishops have ordained him.

The reader will kindly pardon this digression. And now we purpose following Henry Lyte home; he lives somewhere in Whitechapel, but you do not need to know the street.

As Harry said, his Jane was "up in the boughs" about going to Brighton on the morrow; and, would you believe it, she welcomed her husband with a kiss? Now, I shouldn't say, "would you believe it?" only that Jane left off kissing her husband a year or two after they were married, which was a very wrong thing to do, because it is quite right and proper that a wife should kiss her husband, and *vice versa*. You needn't tell anyone, you know, but the fact of it was, there was a *new bonnet* in the wind! Poor unconscious Harry submitted to the kiss, and sat down to his supper as happy as a lord. The clock struck nine; three children were in bed and asleep, but Jane the eldest girl was staying up to keep house while her father and mother went

marketing, as they usually did on Saturday nights. Harry was not so foolish as to booze in public-houses at night, which was a happy thing for the little family. He always accompanied his wife to market, to "see her righted," as he said; and she was very glad of his company. Well, after supper they went out. The summer evening light was fading away, and the silver stars began to peep out.

"I think it will be fine to-morrow," said Jane, "don't you?"

"There is no sign of rain at present," said Harry. "Do you know," he continued, "Watt and I have been having such a confab about Sunday-excursions? he doesn't like them at all."

"He isn't everybody," said Jane, promptly. "Of course you're going to-morrow?"

"O yes," said Harry.

"Harry," said his wife, after a silence, "you know that poor young widow that lodges on the second floor of Mrs. Webb's?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Well, she was a milliner before she was married, and she makes the sweetest bonnets you ever saw."

"Does she?" said Harry.

"Yes; she brought me in one to-day, to look at; one that she has for sale, and my best was lying on the table—this one I've got on, it's my best—and you never saw what a contrast! I

couldn't have believed mine was so shabby." And Mrs. Lyte gave a short laugh.

Harry was slow to take the hint; and she continued—"Do folks dress very smart to go by excursions?"

"Well, I suppose they put on all their best toggery, Jane. What do you want to know for?"

"Because if we should see any one we know I shan't be a disgrace to you in this bonnet, shall I, Harry?"

Harry stopped and looked all round his wife's bonnet. "How much was that one you spoke of?" he asked.

"Only eight shillings, Harry, and *such a dear!*"

"Yes, rather," said Harry drily.

"I mean it is very cheap," said Jane, quickly.

"O, is it? Very well, I suppose you must have it. But Mrs. What's-her-name must stop for the money till next Saturday, because those tickets to-morrow will cost something."

"O, she'll stop," said the delighted Mrs. Lyte; and nothing could possibly ruffle her blessed temper that evening.

The morrow came. The Lyte family was up bright and early. It was, as Mrs. Lyte said, "a dreadful job" to get the children ready in time for the train. By the time they were dressed she was quite in a perspiration, and cross into the bargain. Jane was sent outside, to walk up and

down with the baby till her mother was ready. Harry was ready and waiting; and his frequent "Come, come, Jane, we shall be late," quite upset his flurried wife, and made her, as she said, "twice as long as she should be if he'd hold his tongue." At last she was ready, except having to put on her boots. The smart new bonnet was on her head, and altogether she looked as radiant as a rose, but not very smiling. The second boot was just going on, when lo! the tag came off the lace. "Harry!" she cried to her husband, who was anxiously looking up the street, after his little flock; "it's no use for you to hurry and scurry, here's the tag come off my boot-lace, and I haven't another in the house."

"Here, lass," said Harry, who was determined not to lose his temper, "let me manage it for you." And he stooped down and tried to thread the boot with the tagless lace, missing two or three holes every time.

Well, it was done. Harry took up the parcel of eatables, and Mrs. Lyte the baby. The door was locked, and they took their way to the railway station. A neighbour standing at her door, said to Mrs. Lyte, as she passed, "So you're going by the excursion, are you?"

"Yes; and I almost wish I wasn't. It fairly upsets me."

"Well, let's turn back," said her husband, in an annoyed tone, and halting.

The children looked fearful lest their mother should acquiesce, but she kept steadily on her way ; Harry followed rather moodily.

There was a rush to get tickets at the station, ditto to get places in the train. There was noise for the million. Laughing, joking, grumbling on some sides, chattering interspersed with expressions which I decline writing ; and at last all noises were merged into the one deafening clatter of the speeding train.

A motherly woman, sitting next to Mrs. Lyte, with a little girl on her knee, seemed nervous and discomposed. Said the child to her, “ Auntie, is it *really* Sunday ? It don’t seem like it.”

As they were going through the tunnel one of the passengers shouted, “ Now, it’s neck or nothing ! if there *was* to be a upset it *would* be a mess, for we’re a smartish cargo.”

“ Oh dear,” said the motherly woman to Mrs. Lyte, “ how can he ? It just sets me all of a tremble. I ain’t quite clear about coming by these Sunday excursions, but I thought I should like to run down to Brighton to see my brother. One can’t very well find time for trips on week days ; but I’m dreadful nervous.”

Mrs. Lyte remained silent till they were out of the tunnel, then she took a long breath, and the children’s eyes ceased to dilate.

The large grey-and-white clouds which slowly sailed up from the south-west, flung some drops

of rain against the carriage windows. "It's only a summer shower," said Harry, cheerfully, to his wife; "it'll cool the earth a bit, for there's every promise of a scorching day."

"It proved a long shower, for on arriving at their destination it was coming down smartly. Some of the passengers ruefully declared they didn't believe the sun would "come out" again that day. But after a while he did shew his smiling face, gave them a warm welcome, and set to work to dry up nature's tears.

"It's too late to paddle to church *now*," said Mrs. Lyte, "we must stop here till it dries up a bit. Johnny's boots let wet."

In little over half-an-hour they ventured out. Of course they were overwhelmed with delight on walking for the first time on the sea-shore. There were hundreds who didn't seem to care a bit about the grand sight. They were "enjoying" themselves in their own rollicking boisterous fashion; far from looking "from Nature up to Nature's God," it was manifest that He was not at all in their thoughts. The glories of Nature, the music of the breeze, the hollow moaning of the beautiful sea-waves, seemed to exercise no elevating influence over them. The great majority of the pleasure-seekers seemed to have given themselves entirely up to thoughtless, reckless mirth and joviality. The Sabbath and the God of the Sabbath appeared to be alike forgotten.

They little knew what they were losing.

In the afternoon, as Harry and his charge were streaming about, they came upon one of his fellow-workmen. "Well, to be sure," he said, striking his hand into Harry's open palm, "you here, and the missus, and all!"

Harry laughed.

"Well," continued his friend, "that's what I couldn't stand."

"Mother," cried Jane, "here's Johnny's got a stone in his shoe, and it hurts him dreadful."

"Well, take it off then," said the mother.

"I can't, it's tied in a hundred knots!"

"Here, take the baby, and be quiet telling lies," said Mrs. Lyte impatiently. The transfer of property was not agreeable to all parties, for the baby began screaming lustily.

"How musical!" said Lewis, Harry's fellow-workman. And he added in a whisper, "I say it ain't fair to be tramelled like this on a Sunday, when a fellow wants a bit of a let-up. You should leave the missus and the chits at home, I always do."

"But then," replied Harry, in a tone of apology, "as missus says, it's the only day we've got together, and, you know, I don't like to leave 'em."

"O, that's namby-pamby talk!" replied Lewis. "Well, all I can say is, it's well you can afford it."

"Harry," cried his wife, "can't you just look after one or two when I'm so bothered? Here,

Alice has been tumbling down and cut her hand dreadful! Jane, tear a strip off your 'andkerchief."

Jane squatted down on the beach with the fretful baby, and tore a piece off a calico pocket handkerchief. The wounded child was crying piteously. Tears stole down Jane's flushed and heated face. The poor child had not as yet got any of the enjoyment which she had reckoned upon. She lifted up the heavy baby, and walked to and fro to hush it.

"Harry," said Mrs. Lyte, presently, "I shall sit down and get baby to sleep."

"And I'll take a stroll with Lewis," replied Harry. "The children can play about; I shan't be long."

Mrs. Lyte watched him till he got quite out of sight. She felt anything but happy. She anxiously watched her children romping about, and dirtying their best clothes. "Oh dear," she said to herself, "I wish we'd never had anything to do with excursions at all. I'm sure we were happier when we stayed at home to go to church, and the children went to the Sunday school. It ain't much like Sunday now."

The baby slept but a short time, which was not to be wondered at, considering the noise that reigned on all sides.

Time passed on. The children clamoured for their "tea." Harry Lyte had not returned

from his stroll. "I thought father was going to take us in somewhere to have tea comfortable," said Mrs. Lyte, after she had wandered about wearily for some time in search of her husband. "However, it's no use waiting," she continued, "come and sit down and we'll have something to eat." And she turned to the apparently inexhaustible packet of food which they had brought with them.

They had some time concluded the meal when Harry made his appearance, without Lewis. His face was flushed, and he appeared very merry. His wife said anxiously, "Where's that fellow been taking you to?"

"He didn't *take* me," said Harry, jocularly, "I *went*, and had a glass or two of ale with him."

"Then it's a shame! you know very well how it makes you feel, and—just wait till I catch hold of Master Lewis! I'll teach him that he ought to be looking after them as belongs to him instead of spreeing down here all alone. I didn't expect things would turn out like this: I thought we were going to have tea comfortable together."

A regular domestic "tiff" followed. And as the hour for departure drew on they sulkily wended their way to the railway station.

They succeeded in getting to one of the carriages almost first, and were about to enter when they found that little Alice was missing.

"Where ever's Alice?" said Mrs. Lyte, in

alarm. Harry looked round, but not seeing her said, "You get in, or somebody else'll take your places, I'll see after the child."

Mrs. Lyte reluctantly got in, and took a seat by the door, keeping an anxious look-out for her husband. The carriage filled up; it was no use trying to keep a place for him. A weary looking porter came along to shut the doors.

"Have you seen a little girl with a rag tied round her hand?" she asked anxiously.

"No!"

"Well, don't lock the door, I must get out, there's no room here for my husband."

"It's no use of your getting out, missus," said the porter, "you won't find a better seat."

"Now then! going! going!" shouted a shrill voice; and just then Harry made his appearance with Alice in his arms. He evidently could not find the carriage in which his wife was. She stretched out of the window and shrieked, "Harry!" which gave rise to some coarse jokes among the passengers. But Harry did not hear her; and she had the felicity of seeing him hurriedly bundled into a carriage at the far end of the train.

She felt miserable. I need not enter into details of how they reached home; but as the weary wife descended the stairs after putting the children to bed, she said with a sigh of relief, "Well, I'm glad *this* day's over."

Harry wisely said nothing; but he felt dissatisfied with himself, everything, and everybody.

"The trip hasn't done us much good," he soliloquized; "here we have spent a lot of money, there's Jane's new bonnet to be paid for—though she deserves it, poor soul,—we've had nothing 'for the mind,' as Watt would say, we've had a good many discomforts, and we're as tired as dogs!"

During the week Mrs. Lyte said to her husband, "I shan't have no more Sunday excursions, Harry."

"Lewis was saying last Sunday that it didn't exactly do for women and children," replied Harry. "Besides, it's such an expense, I couldn't stand it for a regular thing. Perhaps I shall run down myself next Sunday."

"Now I should hope not," said his wife in concern; "you know Sunday is the only day we've got together, Harry; I shouldn't like you to run off like that."

"Law, it's what most workmen do," said Harry; "you know they want a let-up, and they can't always afford to take a tribe with 'em."

"To make up for last Sunday's expenses, let us spend next Sunday without even going to Richmond or anywhere," suggested his wife, whose conscience was rather uneasy about the money that she owed to the poor young widow for her bonnet.

Harry considered. "Well," said he, at length, "I don't mind trying Watt's way for once."

On the following Sunday they passed the day very quietly, going to church in the morning,—by going there early they were fortunate enough to obtain very good free sittings, and the sermon was anything but “drowsy.” Harry admitted that it was just the sort of preaching he liked; and something he could understand too. The text was, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” It was a very beautiful sermon. In the afternoon they went for a walk, and in the evening to a chapel which was near their house.

Spending the Sunday so made them neither weary nor cross; neither did it involve them in expenses which they could ill afford.

Harry said he thought he should give up Sunday excursioning for once and all. He was a very intelligent man and fond of reading, and he said that knocking about all day on a Sunday quite robbed him of any time which he might devote to reading.

“And if you’d manage to send the children to the Sunday school in afternoons we might sometimes have a quiet read together, Jane,” he remarked one day; and added, with something of his old fondness, “for I’m determined not to leave you of a Sunday; it would be downright selfish of me. Let others do it if they’ve got the heart. And after all, Jane, I think it’s better to deny one’s-self a bit of pleasure for the sake of keeping

a clear conscience and peace of mind. Just to think of the poor servants and waiters at the public-houses and tea-gardens, and the engine-men, and porters on the drive, drive, when they ought to be at rest, it's cruel and a shame. I don't wonder that Watt holds out against it all so. You see he's thought it over a good deal, and if everybody would do the same I don't think Sunday excursion trains would run much longer."

One day Watt and Harry had another long conversation on this subject, and Watt said, "I've been thinking it would be first-rate to petition the master for a Saturday half-holiday; and we could form a cricket-club, it would be such healthy exercise for us; and an hour on one or two evenings of the week would give us such a jolly opportunity for adding to our little stock of learning. You know master is a regular good one for doing anything that he thinks is for our good, and I really believe that if we were to lay the matter before him he would do what's reasonable and right."

"But, you see, some of the fast ones might get off on the sprec," suggested Harry.

"O, but we would form classes amongst ourselves for self-improvement, and what with that and our cricket club in good weather, and lectures, I think we shall keep together pretty well. However, we'll see about it."

"Ah, you're the man to be leader in anything like this," said Harry, giving his friend a hearty

slap on the back ; “ I hope you’ll help us to carry it out.”

“ We must all do our best,” replied Watt ; “ it’s all for our good, you know. And if the Saturday half-holiday would induce the men to give up, willingly, the Sunday excursion, it would be a blessing. For, wheel round the question as you will, and make what excuses you will for these Sunday excursions, they are sinful.

“ Sunday excursioning isn’t right ; and in that Word of truth which has exalted Britain above all nations of the world we read, ‘ Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day ;’ and when we are found despising that command, we have reason to fear for the greatness of our country. For God’s blessing must be withheld from those who disregard His commands.

“ **RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION : BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE.**”



KIND TURNS.



WE often hear persons say, "I am tired of the world," or "I hate the world," or "This is a bad world," and so on; meaning, of course, not the great round ball which composes our earth, but the *people on it*, who are in the main unjust, selfish, and hard-hearted. If you want to find *sympathy*, you must look for it in the *dictionary*, we are told, and even there it only exists as an *abstract* noun. If you want a "friend," it is like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay; and if you want a "kind turn," you may go from Dan to Beersheba before you are likely to find one. "Charity," too frequently, not only *begins* at home, but *ends* there, and the "open hand" has frequently nothing in it.

Stop a bit—don't let us be too hasty; the world is not all barren, depend upon it; large wastes of stony-heartedness may exist, but the purest gold is often found in the clefts of the rocks, while arid deserts and seas of sand, have their "green oases" even in the midst; and so in this inhospitable world of ours, among the briars and thorns of human cruelty, are to be found the healing herbs of christian love; and these abound everywhere, but not more in the gorgeous palace than in the humble cottage, not more among the high and mighty of the earth than among the poor and lowly—indeed, if I were to be asked where true sympathy would be found, I should not direct the enquirer to "lordly halls," but to "lowly cottages," to the homes of the poor and needy, to the throwers of the shuttle, the

pushers of the plane, the wielders of the pickaxe, and the drivers of the plough.

These reflections were forced upon me in rather a curious manner. I was one day loitering at the corner of a street in "our town," when I observed a man standing under a kind of gateway just opposite to me, having a billhook in his hand. He looked anxiously up the street and down the street; presently he addressed a gentlemanly-looking young man: what he said to him I did not know, but the young fellow shrunk back as if his dignity had been very much offended, and, without deigning to reply, passed on. The man with the billhook looked disappointed, but watched for another passer-by. One presently approached; he was a stalwart fellow; his face was red and bloated, and he looked big enough and strong enough to have pitched a sack of flour into a cart without much exertion; but he also, upon being addressed by the man with the billhook, shook his head, and, like the Levite and the Priest, passed by on the other side. The man with the billhook seemed vexed and perplexed, still, however, continuing on the watch. He did not watch long, nor in vain, for very soon a young sailor boy came by; he was about sixteen, and seemed as if he had just returned from a long voyage, as his face and toggery were rough and weather-beaten. To him the man with the billhook spake. The lad's eyes brightened, and with the alacrity of a young monkey, he turned up the open gateway with the billhook man, and both vanished from my sight.

I was a little curious to know what all this meant, and so I took the liberty to follow the man and the lad up the gateway. Before I had proceeded far I saw "Jack" turning away with all his might at a grindstone,

while the other was sharpening his billhook thereon, and so my curiosity was satisfied. The man wanted a "*kind turn*;" he had been twice refused, but had at last found a helper.

While the stone was performing its revolutions by the arm of the sailor boy, and the sparks were flying about, I heard the loud squalling of a child at a tenement close by. When the child's voice lulled a little, it was followed by a rumbling, grating, and rattling noise; presently I heard the voice of a woman, and I thought I heard the sound of a kiss—it might have been the click of the mangle machinery. I crossed to the other side of the yard, and looking into the door of a tenement which stood wide open, I beheld a poor woman with a baby at her breast, which she held closely to it with one arm, while she turned a mangle with the other. It was rather hard work; so when the billhook was sharpened, the young sailor, who had noticed the "mangling under difficulties," as I had, sprang across the pathway, saying as he came to the door, "Hard work *that*, missus; can't I give *you* a turn? which shall I do?" he continued; "I will either hold the baby or turn the mangle, whichever you like, for I have 'nursed babies and turned mangles many a time."

"If you will only just hold the baby for a few minutes," said the woman, "till I have taken out the pieces from the mangle, I shall be able to get along very well, and then I will put some others in, and if you will give me a turn I shall be very much obliged to you." The woman soon took the things out of the mangle, and put others in; Jack talking to the baby and tossing it up and down in true nursing fashion. When all was ready, Jack gave up his "tender charge," and flew to the

handle of the mangle, which he turned as vigorously as he had previously turned the grindstone. The woman sat down on a chair, suckled the baby, and rocked it to sleep. She then put it to bed in a little cot by the fireside; and by this time, the "things in the mangle," having been "done to a turn," she removed them from the rollers, and thanking the boy for his kindness, offered him two rosy-cheeked apples.

"No, I thank ye," said Jack; "one good turn deserves another. When I was at sea, off the coast of Holland, I ran my boat ashore on the ice. It froze very hard, and it was late in the afternoon. There was nobody in the boat but myself, and I could not see a soul all along the strand to give me a 'shove off.' I tried again and again, but it was of no use, the boat was frozen in as hard as a nail; besides which, a fog had sprung up, and hid the ship to which I belonged entirely from view. A pretty mess I was in, was I not?" continued Jack, appealing to me and the woman. "There was hardly a shelter all along the low line of coast, and not a soul to be seen, as I said before. I tugged and I pushed, and I tried to break the ice that had frozen round my boat, but to no purpose; it froze sharper and sharper, and the ice got harder and harder, and my hands and fingers began to get so numb, that I could scarcely feel them, and I began to think that I should be frozen to death before morning, for there was no other boat to our ship—she being only a 'billy-boy,' and those on board could render me no assistance.

"While I was wondering what I should do, and the fog having partly cleared away, I saw a woman paddling away in a small Dutch coble; she was not far from the

shore, and appeared to be quite knocked up by her rowing. Her eyes were full of tears. I hailed her; she told me that her husband had been washed overboard while hauling in his nets, that she was rowing homewards as fast as she could, and feared she should not save the ebb, which was setting rapidly down shore, and if she did not she should have to knock about on the open sea all night. Her home was at a small fishing village about four miles down the coast. I knew she had no time to spare, but my case was desperate, and telling her in a few words the fix I was in, she at once ran her boat into the ice close to mine, and with a short hand-pick which she had in her boat, set to work with such good heart that in a few minutes the ice was broken up. The kind woman then helped me to shove off my boat into the sea, and I soon regained my ship. Well, you know," continued Jack, "that kind assistance seemed to sink deep into my heart, and I said to myself, 'As long as I live I'll never refuse a kind turn to anybody;' and so good-bye, my good woman, for I am only just come home, and our craft will be off again to-morrow morning. I am just going to have an hour or two with my mother, and must be on board before high-water; good-bye, good-bye." So saying, Jack gave a bit of a sea-lurch, and was out of sight in a twinkling.

And so the sailor boy played *his* part. He seemed to understand the Divine maxim, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." It was not a great thing to do—the turning of a grindstone or a mangle; there was but small self-sacrifice, which is the true glory of a kind act; but I hold that he who is ready to help another in a small way, would

do so in a large one, had he the opportunity. We cannot all ennoble ourselves amid "the flourish of trumpets and drums;" we cannot indulge in the luxury of clemency or magnanimity from "thrones of high estate," nor have our "nothings monstered" by the frantic applause of the giddy multitude. But *we*—that is, "working men and women," hidden, as we may be, from the glare of the world's sunshine, shut out from the saloons of fashion and frivolity by high factory walls, or cyclopedian smoke, or the dust of whirring machinery, yet with us the soul has still elbow-room, and the heart is not a mere pump or mechanical arrangement in our system. No, no! we can yet learn to play the man, as man ought to be played, full of truth and love, even in the swathing bands of hard labour and repressed energies; and though we work amid stony quarries or iron mines, yet we may have hearts of flesh; and with our hard and rough hands may soft and delicate feelings be found.

And as to opportunities, they abound everywhere. There is no time, or place, or mode, or exigency of life, in which opportunities do not present themselves of doing good to our fellow-men. As the whole universe is mutually dependent, as suns and stars are bound together by attraction, and dew-drop mingles with dew-drop, in obedience to this universal principle, so does heart beat to heart by the like universal law of sympathy. And we have only to obey the teachings of the spirit of love, the suggestions of goodness multiplied within us, to make us as "ministering angels" to all around, and thus "do the will of our Father" on earth as it is done in heaven.

There are many beautiful things on this beautiful earth—the sun in his rising and setting, the meadows

in their spring-time of flowers, the orchards in their profusion of luscious fruit, the corn-fields in their harvests of gold, and the glorious starry firmament, burning with ten thousand eyes of fire, how beautiful is it! But there is something far more beautiful than all this—it is a good man doing a kind turn to his neighbour; the “helping hand” giving forth its strength; the human eye glistening with a tear of pity; or the feeling heart bleeding at another’s woe.

Much is to be learned by those who observe what is occurring in the passing panorama of life, and who walk with their eyes open, and who do not shut them to the light of truth, whether its rays proceed from the glorious sun above, or the small crevice of the humble cottage in which the farthing rushlight makes its touching revelations. In the broad street, in the narrow alley, in the crooked court, “lessons of instruction” are to be found, and “teachings of love” are going on. One kind-hearted fellow may be seen, as he walks along, carefully removing orange peel from the pavement, that the legs and arms of the passers-by may not be put in jeopardy. On one occasion, I saw a poor man walk into the middle of the road, and pick up some broken glass, which he threw into a ditch, and which he thought might be perilous to some poor horses’ feet. At another time, I noticed a poor woman, old and feeble, hesitating and trembling at a crossing, when a “knight of the plane” came up, and speaking very politely, offered his arm, and led her across the road in safety. I saw another working man, with the greatest kindness, take a piece of grit from the eye of a stranger, which the doctor had been unable to remove. Another generously took up a poor washerwoman’s barrow, which he wheeled

for a considerable distance. "Help me to raise this ladder," said a bricklayer to a labouring man going going. "With all my heart," said the man, and the ladder was quickly raised. A cartful of bricks was along uphill, drawn by a single horse, when the horse jibbed from exhaustion and fell. In vain the driver tried to get the beast on his legs; he tried again and again, but to no purpose. At last, without even a word, he held up his whip, and looked at the bystanders, and immediately half-a-dozen men were either at the wheels, or the shafts, or hanging on behind, till the horse was on his legs again, when a united shove behind the cart soon sent it to the top of the hill. Instances might be multiplied of "little kindnesses" and "little helps" being exercised among working men. Their name is "legion," and I only regret that I have not space to record them as well as the noble acts of disinterestedness, self-sacrifice, and generosity, which I have noticed among working men. A few, however, I must relate.

There was a remarkably strong man in our town, one Tom Soames. He was what is called a ship's porter, and was generally employed to load and unload ships lying in the docks, carrying the cargoes from the holds of the vessels to the floors of the warehouses. The cargoes consisted for the most part of sacks of corn, and the price the porters had for their work was so much per score—that is, so much for each twenty sacks. These, of course, they took on their shoulders from the vessel, and running along a board, delivered them safely in the warehouse, their day's wages depending upon the number of sacks they carried. One of these porters, named James Poulter, had the misfortune to fall from the plank on which he was walking from the ship to the

shore, with a sack of wheat on his shoulders. Unfortunately, the tide was out, and the dock was dry. If the tide had been in and the water up, the poor fellow would, perhaps, have met with no further mishap than a sound ducking. As it was, he fell, sack and all, upon the hard stones, wrenched his back very severely, and dislocated his shoulder. This was indeed a sad misfortune, for the poor fellow had a wife and six children at home, totally dependant upon him for bread. His mates of course felt for him, but they had little to give, and what they gave went but a very small way, and the poor fellow had no other alternative than being taken to the union house with his whole family, a resource so repugnant to him, that, as he said, “ he felt he should die the moment he entered the doors.”

When Tom Soames, who, as I said, was a remarkably strong man, heard of the accident of Poulter, he was sorely distressed ; at the same time he felt, as he expressed it, almost like a Samson in his muscles and sinews. There was no Philistine to be slain, no lion’s jaws to be rent, no city gates to be carried away, no heathen temples to be pulled down, but a feat was to be performed of higher and greater value—there was a poor man and his wife and family to be assisted, starving children to be fed. How could Tom help them ? He thought of the words of the apostle, “ Gold have I none, and silver have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee.”

He had strength—extraordinary muscular strength, beyond that of common men. He had been known to lift from the ground a live ox, to raise two sacks of flour, and to twist the kitchen poker of the “ Red Lion ” as easily as if it had been a bit of cane. ’Tis true, the

very fulness of his manhood was gone ; he had passed the age of fifty ; he could no longer perform the feats of strength for which he was celebrated ; besides which, he had ricked himself in the loins once or twice, and he had for some time refrained from any exhibition of his former feats ; but when the accident to Poulter occurred, and he saw how the case stood with regard to the poor fellow's having to go to the Union, Tom mustered his strength once again. He went to the merchant who employed the porters, and made an offer to take two sacks from the ships to the warehouse instead of one in his regular time with the other men, and thus to do Poulter's work for him while he lay sick, paying to him every week the extra earnings for the portorage. The generous offer was accepted. Tom worked away cheerfully from day to day, but not without pain or fatigue. He felt his natural force abated, but he laboured on for about thirteen weeks, doing double spells all the time, and never ceased till the sick man was placed firmly on his legs again, and able to perform his daily duty.

It is, I have no doubt, a very fine thing to see the coronation of a monarch, the enthroning of a bishop, the pomp and ceremony of the triumphal entry of a victorious hero into the capital of the country he has subdued, but I am of opinion that it was a much more sublime spectacle to see "Tom Soames" with a sack of wheat strung by means of a band over each shoulder, as was the case, walking from ship to shore and from the shore to the granary, with the heroic determination of helping a fellow-labourer. There is a moral grandeur, as well as a physical grandeur ; the latter is generally a mere artificial affair, got up for show, like the puppet

procession of a travelling circus, while the former is an intrinsic and real production, made to endure, not for a season merely, but for all time.

The story of the strong porter is not a fictitious, nor is it a singular one—that is, it is not the only one of its kind; it does not stand alone, for, as I have said, many are the “kind turns” among the working classes. In the very same town of the “strong porter” there were two rival milkmen. Each had, indeed, their separate “walks,” but it frequently happened that little differences arose as to the trade of the “border-states”—that is, upon those parts of the walks that trenched upon, or intermingled with each other. Of course, the milkmen were both jealous of their trade, and had their little altercations now and then; but they were both christian men; one went to church and the other to chapel, and as often as they differed, so they practised mutual forgiveness, to the great advantage of both.

Now it so happened that one of the milkmen, whose name was Potter, was seized with a dangerous distemper—the small-pox. His was a very bad case, and the disease soon extended to his wife and one of the children, who were “laid down” with it, as the phrase goes. The neighbours would not go near him, and the people belonging to his milk-walk fancied the milk which he sent round by his biggest boy was infected with the disease. “Now is the time for you,” said one of Walker’s friends to him, “Now is the time for you to walk into the other milk-walk, and get the whole custom to yourself.”

“Yes, now is the time for me,” said Walker, “you are quite right, now is the time for me, and I will take advantage of it.”

So the lucky milkman provided himself with a donkey and a couple of biggish casks, in lieu of his cans, which would not hold enough for an increased supply. He walked into his rival's trade with the greatest ease. The nice, well-brushed donkey—to say nothing of the drollery of it—the white and clean casks, and the civil attention of Walker, won the hearts both of cats and women. In less than a week he had obtained the whole of his rival's connection, selling exactly double the milk that he had sold before.

“It was a lucky hit for you,” said the same conscientious friend who had said to him before, “Now is your time.”

“Yes, it is a lucky thing for me,” replied Walker, “and I mean to turn it to the best account.”

And so he did ; for he kept a strict account of all the milk he sold to his rival's customers, and at the end of every week, for nine weeks, he made out a sort of balance sheet as to what he had paid for the milk, the profits thereon, the whole of which he handed over weekly to the other milkman, keeping, at the same time, his trade together, and holding it, as it were, in trust ; and when the man got well, and the small-pox was out of the house, he gave him all his customers back again, thanking God for giving him the opportunity and for enabling him to make the most of it, and of turning it to the best account, namely by including it in *that account* which must be rendered up to God at our *final settlement*.

Among the poorer classes, even the very poorest, there is often a large amount of sympathy exercised, for with the labouring classes mishaps are ever present. There are the lyings-in and the layings out, the hard-

ships of poverty, the struggles to keep the head above water, and the expenses of the sick-bed. Amid all these there are many who do "kind turns" repeatedly, and some who are never more happy than when doing them. I have more than once met among the very poorest the most heroic devotion in the cause of suffering humanity. One dear old creature I can mention, who is worthy more praise than I can bestow upon her. Her name is Patty Sawyer, who, sunk in the depths of the lowest poverty herself, and having no dependence whatever, except a small annuity of three shillings a week from the club of her long-deceased husband, yet devotes herself to the necessities of her fellow-creatures with such an ardour of kindness as to be truly wonderful. Wherever a case of real necessity exists, there "Patty" is sure to be seen, scenting, as it were by instinct, the places of misery, as Billy, the fireman's dog, is stated to have smelt a fire at an almost inconceivable distance, setting off to it as fast as his legs would carry him. Often is old Patty on the ground at "a lying-in" before the doctor; often is she seen early in the morning lighting the invalid's fire, and setting out the breakfast for poor children deprived of motherly care. Where fever rages old Patty is sure to be seen, and no fear of danger ever withholds her from doing her part to "make things comfortable," as she calls it; and I have known her to go to a cottage, turn out every bit of dirty linen she could find, put a fire in the copper flue, set the water boiling, and wash and iron the whole, rather than the poor sick family should not have some clean linen, for "clean linen is such a comfort," she says. On one occasion, a malignant fever had invaded a fetid court in one of the back slums of St. Peter's parish. Fear had

seized the surrounding neighbours ; not one would enter the abode of death, and none could be found to administer the least service to the plague-stricken inmates of one of the cottages ; but Patty was soon on the spot, doing her best in every way. She not only sat up day and night to attend upon the sick, but she laid out the dead and comforted the dying, and by her energy and perseverance, stayed the pestilence. I believe the heroic exertions of this good old creature saved the lives of numbers, as her christian example edified and attracted all. It was one particular feature of this woman's earnest benevolence, that she always steadily refused to receive a farthing in money for what she did ; she would take her scanty meal at the house in which she laboured, but nothing more ; and often have her own slender means been taxed to enable her to exist while in the performance of her "labour of love." Among the noble deeds of women, we hear of queens, and duchesses, and ladies of high birth and with very long pedigrees, and we find their virtues emblazoned upon marble monuments and painted sepulchres ; but worthy as their deeds may be of record and of sculptured effigy, it is probable that in the eye of the OMNISCIENT some of the most vaunted of virtues will pale before the fire of old Patty's "heart love," and look dim beside her humble doings amid the haunts of poverty, the hot-beds of disease, and in the regions of wretchedness and death.

One of the greatest blessings we enjoy in this free country is freedom of opinion, and the right which every one has to worship God according to the convictions of his conscience, and to discuss religious questions in all their bearings without being called to account by a dominant power. This privilege, so great, so truly

catholic, is the very life and soul of christianity in a nation; without it we should be doomed to remain in "the slough of despond," and to crawl about in the slime of bigotry and superstition, to the utter degradation of all our faculties, both intellectual and moral. But blessed be God, our thoughts are as free as the air we breathe, and may range under a dome as wide, and as high, and as pure and beautiful as the canopy of heaven itself. The "little Bethel" may say to the great Cathedral, "I, too, am one of the churches;" the inspired cordwainer may say to the enthroned bishop, "I, too, am among the prophets;" and the common labourer may join issue with the doctor of divinity in the elucidation of scriptural truth and gospel doctrine. Hence, controversy, when not indulged in at the expense of christian charity, is a noble element in our spiritual economy. The mind of man is fond of investigation, is emulous of proof, is desirous of conviction, and so it is that, in our zeal for the truth, the best of men have sometimes come to loggerheads, and fierce wars, both of pen and tongue, have been waged without any infringement of that charity, which "beareth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things," as the tale I have to relate will sufficiently illustrate.

There were two members of our mechanics' institution, one named Harry King, and the other Joseph Smithers. They were both working men; Harry was a painter, and Joe a stonemason. They were of very opposite religious convictions, and both were sincerely desirous of converting each other to his own way of thinking. Whenever they met of an evening their favourite topic was sure to come up. It is no matter what it was, for it related to those non-essentials of

religion, about which there has been controversy for the last eighteen hundred years, and which "synods," and "councils," and "conclaves" have never yet been able to determine, though the rack and the faggot have been freely used, and oceans of blood have been shed, with an especial aim at uniformity. Often did Harry and Joe, when they met, bristle up at each other's opinions; often like two game cocks did they crow and strut at each other, and stretch out their necks in the furor of polemical zeal; and then they would set to and fight, not in the way of fisty-cuffs, but with the weapons of words—sharp, bitter, strong, always vehement, but never conclusive. Sometimes Harry would get a terrible knock-down blow, then Joe would be thrown with a syllogistic cross-buttock over the pale, and now and then both were put "*hors de combat*" in the fight. Then the subject would be dropped for a time; but when both got a little wind, and picked up more ammunition from the spiritual store, they would at it again with renewed ferocity. At last, however, out of sheer exhaustion, hostilities seemed completely suspended, and the two belligerents broke up their respective camps in terrible ill-humour with each other, for neither of them were convinced, and each thought his fellow dreadfully in the wrong.

It so happened that Harry and Joe were at work on the same building—a huge brewery, which, in addition to a tall chimney, had a very handsome elevation, and a noble frontage of the Corinthian order carried up to an imposing height. Harry was finishing some tip-top work on the highest part of the erection, and had to paint a lion, which stood as a crest or insignia to denote the "Lion Brewery," and to give perhaps an idea of the strength of the beer manufactured under its name

and mane. Joe was at work below, pointing some of the stones of the basement with Roman cement. Harry was just giving the finishing touch to the lion above; to do this, however, in front, he was obliged to creep round the edge of the cornice, but in order to make himself secure, he had fastened himself to a rope attached to a crowbar, which had been fixed in the interstices of the stonework behind the lion. He then moved cautiously along to the front, with his paint pot and brushes in his hand, not indeed without fear; but he was a bold man, and daring. He had just put the first dab of paint on the nose of the lion, when the crowbar began to wriggle, and the rope that held him to slacken. He immediately tried to hold on by the coping stones close to him, but he missed them, slipped, and fell over to the cornice close below. This he grasped—if it can be called grasping—with the tips of his fingers, and hung for a few seconds between heaven and earth, with seemingly nothing to prevent his falling a depth of between sixty and seventy feet, and being dashed to pieces on the basement below. It was impossible for him to sustain himself for more than a few minutes in this horrible situation, and death and eternity were staring him in the face; yet at this hopeless moment help was at hand. Joe had heard his cry of despair, and was looking up towards him from the bottom of the building. He soon saw it was his old polemical friend—or rather enemy. He believed that if he died without a change in his opinions his soul would be lost as surely as his body would be destroyed. He knew that “drop he must.” There was but one thing to be done, and that was, to interpose his own body between the falling man and the hard stones, and so to break his fall. His own life was

in jeopardy, but christian love told him to risk it, and he did not hesitate a moment. He called out to Harry to drop into his arms, and he would catch him. The wretched man fell with a tremendous shock on the shoulders and upon the arms of Joe, and both were doubled up together into a mass, and fell apparently lifeless on the stony platform. In a short time they were taken to the hospital, where they remained for several months, and each came out crippled for life.

Ah, how much is a christian deed of love better than controversy! How much holier is a touch of Divine sympathy than the hot zeal of furious enthusiasm! and how thankful ought we to be, that, notwithstanding the contests about "non-essentials," the discord about surplices or candlesticks, crosses and piscinas, the meaning of obscure texts, or the interpretation of the Divine mysteries, christians do not after all forget to love each other. If our love did not burn brighter than our bigotry, our state would be perilous. But we do see, in spite of all our strife and bitterness, and all the acrimony of religious sects, that christian men *do* love each other. On every side in this protestant land do we behold institutions and asylums for almost every infirmity to which human nature is liable. Hospitals, schools, missionaries abroad and at home, visiting societies, asylums for the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the insane, for the poor man stricken by years, and for the suffering and afflicted of every grade and kind. United effort, individual effort, on all sides, for the purpose of alleviating suffering and misfortune. So let us go on, and may in-door love go side by side with our out-door charities. May love burn within us to the warming of our household, to the comforting of our neighbours, and

to the good of our species, whether they be friends or enemies; for "love is the fulfilling of the law," and he who loveth God will love his brother also, and with a love that all the bitter cavils of the world cannot destroy.

There are so many ways for a man to do good when he has the mind, that it would be difficult to recount them; and a man is never too old to begin a work of love. Some years ago a haberdasher of London left off business, as soon as he "had enough," as he called it, and he "sold off," and settled down at a small town on the borders of Hampshire. His "enough" secured him but a very small income; but he had no children, and both he and his wife were of simple frugal habits, and their united income barely exceeded a hundred pounds a year. He had not much to give away; but he soon found out, that in the place in which he resided, there was much to be done which it needed but little money to do—that tact and knowledge, energy and perseverance, and the love of God and man did wonders.

It was in a very small cottage that Ephraim Gray and his wife Bridget lived. It had only six rooms, a neat garden, with a little brook running at the bottom of it, and a small summer-house, from which he at first obtained a view over a portion of the grounds of Squire Bumpus, who took occasion, on the second year of his residence, to build a high brick wall before it, so as completely to shut out the view. This Squire Bumpus resided in a large house above him on the hill, and looked down with (of course) ineffable contempt upon the poor haberdasher. He kept a regular establishment in town, a regular establishment in the country, and a regular establishment abroad. He bagged hundreds of

pheasants, hares, and partridges daily, and sent them to the London poulterers for sale. He kept a splendid stud of hunters and racers. He drove four-in-hand, patronized prize-fighters, gamblers, and sharpers, and spent his money either at making a show, or getting up a great name among the heroes of the "turf."

The old haberdasher's "turf" was about twelve feet by eight, just in front of his little cottage porch. There were a few flowers around it—double daisies, pansies, daffodils, sweet scabious, and the like; and there was a little plot of arable land, about twenty feet square, close by, where the old man essayed to grow a variety of flower seeds, the young plants of which he delighted to give to the cottage gardens round about him; and I have no doubt that Ephraim derived more real pleasure from his little bit of grass plot, with its accompanying seed-bed, and the opportunity it gave him to do a kind turn now and then in the "flower way" to his neighbours, than any that my lord could derive from all his establishments abroad or at home, with all his turf transactions or game preserving into the bargain.

Then the poor haberdasher was in possession of enormous wealth of a kind that Squire Bumpus knew nothing of; it was of greater extent than his broad acres, of far more intrinsic value than shares and scrip and hoarded thousands, of more importance than houses, horses, and hounds, and capable of affording him a pleasure uncloying and substantial; and this was, a feeling and a generous heart—a comfort to himself, and also a comfort to many that were around him.

Usefulness, and duty, and kindness of heart—these are great levers in God's spiritual kingdom, and will remove mountains of difficulty. The idea of usefulness

was ever upon his mind, and he soon saw that, poor as he was, he might make himself useful in a variety of ways, and therefore he laid himself out to do a number of things that other folk would not take the trouble of doing. He had retained one of the lessons learnt in his early boyhood, long before he was called upon to take the position of man's responsibility, namely, "to do his duty in that state of life unto which it should please God to call him." He had not been called to be a statesman, or a legislator, or a soldier, or a physician, or a minister, or to do his duty to his country on a large and imposing scale. He had been called to do his duty as a haberdasher. He had done his duty as a haberdasher, and sustained one of the noblest of characters, that of an upright and honest tradesman. He had now to do his duty to the community with which he lived as a friend and neighbour.

"When duty calls we must obey," Ephraim would have sung, but he was no singer; he, however, sung it in his heart, and began to look about him for the first thing to be done. Bridget had been doing her duty among the poor from the first. What should Ephraim do in the prosecution of social science and the development of domestic economy?

The town of Woodgrove was in the centre of a rural district, and the first thing Ephraim noticed was, that nobody knew how far it was to the adjacent villages; there were eight or nine of them altogether, lying at every point of the compass, and strangers wanting to go to these places were continually very much deceived as to distance, especially those who had to hire gigs, or the like, at the public houses; for instance, the village

of Puddlebog, which was only two miles and three-quarters, was generally called three and a half, or four and a quarter sometimes; and the same discrepancy was common to the other places. Ephraim thought that it would be a capital thing to have these distances accurately ascertained for the benefit of the public, and therefore he borrowed a "mile wheel," and measured from the church of Woodgrove to that of Puddlebog, and so on of all the other villages, at the same time taking their exact bearings, east, west, north, or south, as the case might be. He then had all this painted on a board, and got permission to have it stuck up near the Post-office, for the benefit of travellers in general, and the townspeople of Woodgrove in particular.

The next thing that Ephraim turned his attention to was what he thought a cruel grievance. He felt for the poor, as every good man should. He knew what they had to endure, the struggles they had to make, and the evils they had to encounter. He did not like them to be imposed upon, but he knew that they often paid more for the worst articles of consumption than the rich did for the best. A very cold winter set in, coal rose to a great price, but this was not all; the poor had double dues to pay, owing to the manner in which the coal was supplied to them. Of course the poor labourer or handicraftsman cannot lay in coal by the ton—he must buy it by the hundred; and the way in which the poor obtained it was through a middle man, who bought a ton or chaldron or so of inferior coal, which he retailed out by the hundred at an advanced price. Ephraim bought twenty tons of the very best coal before the cold weather set in, which he retailed to the poor at the cost price. He did more than this; he

hired a donkey and cart, so that the coal was delivered to the purchasers free of all charge for carriage.

Bridget was no less active in her way among the poor. In her visits to the sick, she often found persons with lingering and painful complaints. Sometimes a poor creature would be what is called "bed-ridden," and week after week, month after month, nay, year after year, would lie in great agony from some painful disease. Ephraim had seen a "water-bed" at the Polytechnic institution, the first one exhibited by Dr. Arnott. He saw at once the great comfort which might be derived to invalids from its use. He therefore set to work, obtained a subscription from a few Quaker friends to begin with, others joined in the benevolent work, and in less than a fortnight a "free water-bed" was established for the use of the "poor" in the town of Woodgrove.

The "water-bed" soon led the way to the establishment of a dispensary; and when the dispensary was set fairly agoing, Ephraim got up "garden grounds" for the working classes. He was also mainly instrumental in getting up a "mechanics' institution," and a "penny savings club." He had during the winter an "evening school," in a large room, which was lent for the purpose, and here in the long winter nights he used to exhibit a "magic lantern," and talk to the lads about the wonders of creation, and the wisdom and goodness of their Heavenly Father.

One of the best things that Ephraim did—and would his example were followed in every town in the kingdom!—was the establishment of what he called a Juvenile Guardian Society. This he intended for the overlooking and encouragement of lads after they had

left school, during that dangerous period that intervenes between boyhood and manhood, called sometimes the age of "hobbledehoydom." It is indeed a dangerous period for the young, for then it is that youthful ardour and imagination, and the violence of the passions begin to manifest themselves, before the reasoning faculties have learned to act. The object of this society was to afford fostering care and guidance to lads of this age, to invest their weekly savings, to guide them in their reading, to select proper amusements for them, and to direct them in the way they should walk in accordance with the Divine precepts. More than fifty lads joined this society, and rose up to be men, blessing the name of their kind friend and benefactor.

There were many other ways in which this good Samaritan exerted himself. He was instrumental in improving the sanitary condition of the place, and went about from door to door among the poorer classes, explaining to them the laws of health; nor was he ever backward in risking his life when necessary for the benefit of the afflicted. On one occasion, during the time of the cholera, three houses in one narrow street were attacked by the dreadful disease. The neighbours fled from the adjacent houses panic-struck; the parish authorities in vain directed that the dead should be separated from the dying, and that the place should be purified and lime-washed. None were found but the old haberdasher and his wife to throw themselves, as it were, into the jaws of death. With their own hands they worked at this labour of love, and, encouraged by their noble example, the timid at last came forward to assist. We talk of the sublimity of Nature in her imposing forms, of the thundering cascade, or the

heaven-piercing mountain, but nothing equals man's moral sublimity, which as much exceeds that of the natural world, as heaven exceeds earth, and the beauty of which will remain when heaven and earth are no more.

Instances of "kind turns" might be multiplied, but it must not be forgotten that this sinful world of ours also abounds in *unkind turns*, and that there is a vast deal of ingratitude in it. Neighbours, even next-door neighbours, instead of being the best of friends, are often the bitterest of enemies, and frequently distress and annoy each other without the slightest reason, except the gratification of their envious, morose, and spiteful natures. They have thousands of opportunities for performing little services to each other, and frequently neglect them all. I have known a peevish and un-neighbourly person to cut off the tops of some beautiful espalier apple trees in full blossom, because they peaked a little over a garden wall which divided his own garden from that of a neighbour to whom the apple trees belonged. I have known another who refused to let a poor man pick up a few walnuts, which he had dashed from his own tree, when they fell into an adjacent field. I have known others to poison their neighbours' cats and fowls, and cannot forbear relating one case of neighbourly unkindness which fell under my own observation only a few years ago, and which forcibly illustrates what want of feeling may exist among what are nominally called christians.

A poor shoemaker brought up a pet blackbird, of which he was very fond. It grew up into plumage and song, and when the primroses and violets came, its melody was charming. Its owner hung it in its cage

on a nail at the back of his house, close to his chamber window, and early in the morning its chirpings and its whistlings began, to the poor man's delight, for they awoke him to his work at an early hour, and made the morning joyous to him. Now a few doors from the shoemaker's little house, in a large one lived a Mrs. Rackets, to whom the matins and even song of the blackbird was a great annoyance. When her ill-nature and bad conscience would not let her sleep, she laid it to the blackbird, and the song that was so lovely to all others, was to her, harsh, grating, and disagreeable, for it gave evidence that there was one thing at least happier than herself, and she determined to get rid of the annoyance ; but this was not to be brought about so easily ; had it been a cat, she could have trapped it ; had it been a pig, she might have strychnined it ; but it was difficult to get at the bird, he was too far off and hung too high to be conveniently got at. She, however, sent to the shoemaker to abate the nuisance, as she called it. She threatened legal proceedings through her lawyer, and the poor shoemaker was terribly frightened ; but the neighbours took his part, and advised him to let his bird sing away as loud as it liked, and to pay no attention to the unreasonable requirement of the lady.

But the poor shoemaker was at last thrown down by a fever, and lay at death's door. His wife and family fell into extreme want, many of their household goods had to be disposed of, and they had scarcely bread to eat. Yet the bird sang as sweetly and as joyfully as before, and the little children could, poor as they were, always find a crust for him ; and when the sick man cast his looks towards the songster, as he lay, unable to rise from his pillow, it fluttered its wings with delight, and

would sing a song of such touching melody as to bring tears into the eyes of all.

But doctors' bills came in, so long, and with such a sting in their tails, that the shoemaker trembled as he lay in his bed. The doctor insisted on being paid at least a part of his bill; and when the sick man pleaded poverty, the doctor said, "What right have you to plead poverty when you can afford to keep a bird which must cost you money, and is only an annoyance to your neighbours. It is your *duty* to sell it, and I know you can get a good price for it, and so you may satisfy somebody of his claim against you." The idea of duty made a forcible impression upon the sick man's mind. "If it is my duty," he said to himself, "to sell the bird, then I must sell it." So, after many a heart-tug, he at last resolved to part with his pet, and, what was very fortunate, as he thought, the doctor himself offered to become its purchaser, on behalf of a friend who had taken a great fancy for it; and so the bird was taken away forthwith, cage and all.

The next morning, when the invalid, who was fast sinking to the place where the wicked cease to trouble and the weary are at rest, opened his eyes, he thought of his bird; but it was no longer there to cheer his sad heart with a morning hymn. The little children stood around the bed with watery eyes, and his poor wife too, charged as she was with family cares of far greater import, could not help thinking of the beloved songster. As the family were about sitting down to breakfast, a knock was heard at the door; Lissy, the youngest of the girls, who was about six years old, opened the door, and took in a parcel nicely wrapped in brown paper, tied and sealed with black wax. The sick father held

out his hand for it, thinking it might be some kind present from a friend or neighbour. He opened the outer enclosure as well as his trembling fingers would permit him, and found the inner one to consist of a cigar box, on which was written "With Mrs. Racket's compliments." He opened the case—it was the body of his blackbird, cold, and stiff. The poor shoemaker died the next day, and Mrs. Rackets lives to triumph over him.

Yes, we are not all kind-hearted. The hearts of some of us are but frozen deserts, in which the flowers of sympathy fail to vegetate. People abound on every side of us with hearts as hard and as cold as ice. The sun of Divine love has a great struggle to pierce through the misty atmosphere of our souls, and ingratitude, with a serpent's tooth, would frequently wound the hand stretched forth in its service. This is perhaps the most formidable of all foes to happiness, and like the petrifying water, which turns the flowers thrown into it to stone, so does ingratitude harden our generous sympathies.

But although cruelty and ingratitude may abound, although our motives may be questioned or our humanity abused, it is our duty to go on doing all the good we can, in the spirit and in the strength of our Divine Redeemer; we are not to be deterred in our walks of mercy by a want of thankful-heartedness, for our heavenly Father is continually showering His blessings on us, and we cease to be thankful because they *are so common*. Let us not forget that He who "laid down His life for His sheep," and who "went about doing good," was scourged, buffeted, betrayed, spat upon, and crucified. So, though we too may suffer through the world's injustice and its wrong; it is our duty

to go on ; and in our intercourse with our fellow-men, in the *high-way*, and the *bye-way*, and the *crooked way*, on the *broad common*, in the *narrow lane*, in the *wretched garret*, or the *crowded cellar*, nor less in the *workshop* or the *factory*, the *mine*, the *dock*, or *railway cutting*, amid the whirr and buzz of the loom or the spindle, the chatter of the mill hopper, the din of the forge hammer, or the sparks from the anvil—there is no place or spot which the religion of love cannot consecrate as a temple, and where deeds of mercy may not send up incense from the altar. KINDNESS gives a poor man a lift with his load ; *kindness* gives him a shove off to his boat, *kindness* pushes behind the heavily-laden tumbril, *kindness* turns the widow's mangle, *kindness* guides the blind man in his path—in short, kindness is required everywhere, and is as necessary to our social existence as is the light and warmth of the sun to the natural creation.

Let us pray to our heavenly Father, whose most emphatic name is LOVE, that His Spirit may abound in us, both teaching us and urging us in the way of our daily duty, so that we may never refuse a “kind turn” to those that are in “danger, distress, and tribulation.” Though we may move in ever so humble a sphere of life, man is never insignificant, but full of the significance of God's image impressed upon him, and in which he lives, and moves, and has his being. The thrill of sympathy, which induces us to feel for another's sorrow, has its origin in Him whose “tender mercies are over all His works.” “Jesus wept !” God is love and sympathy in Christ. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty

might be rich." Oh! what a world this would be were there no pity in it, and how terribly cursed must be the heart that has no wellspring of love! Let us never lose an opportunity of doing good—not to friends only, but also to our enemies, for this is the crowning glory of the christian creed. Commencing from the focus of the household hearth, let our humanity spread; and as the stone multiplies its circle waves when dropped in the quiet lake, so let the pulsations of our love go on extending from this centre point to the widest extent of which they are capable, till they beat at the gates of heaven.



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